

Univ. of Ill. Library

53
2047

Price 25

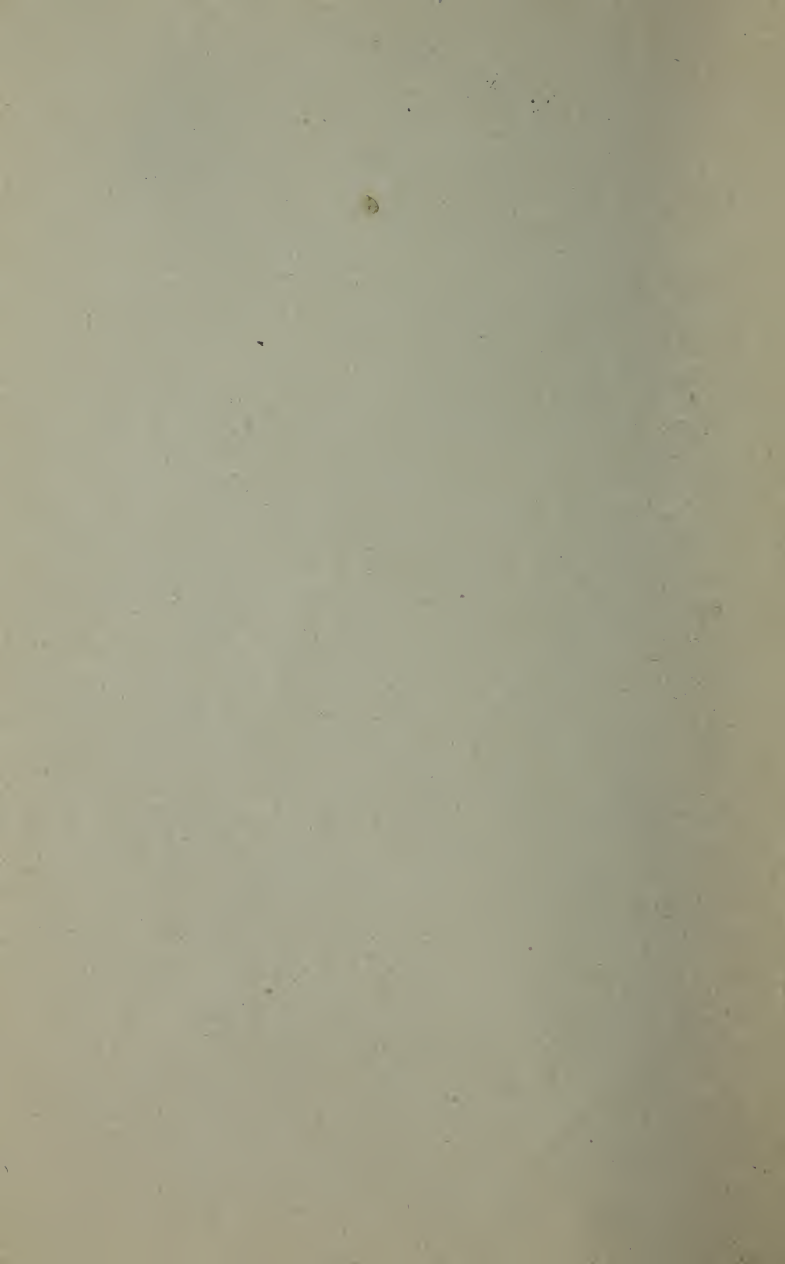
Oak Street
UNCLASSIFIED

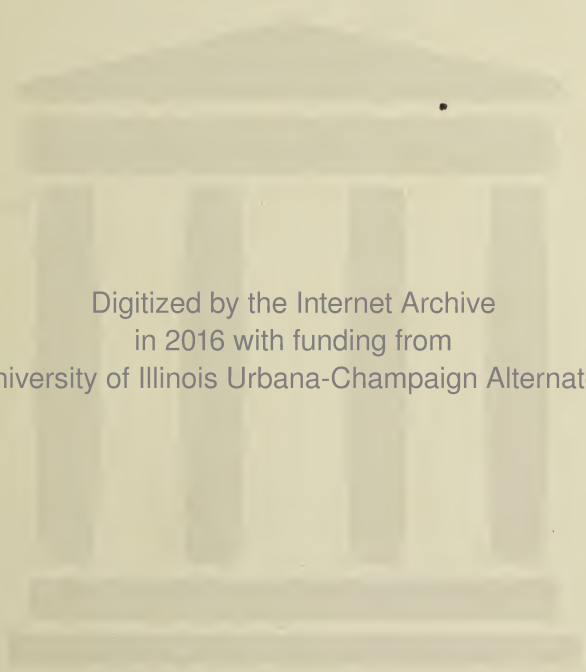
LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS



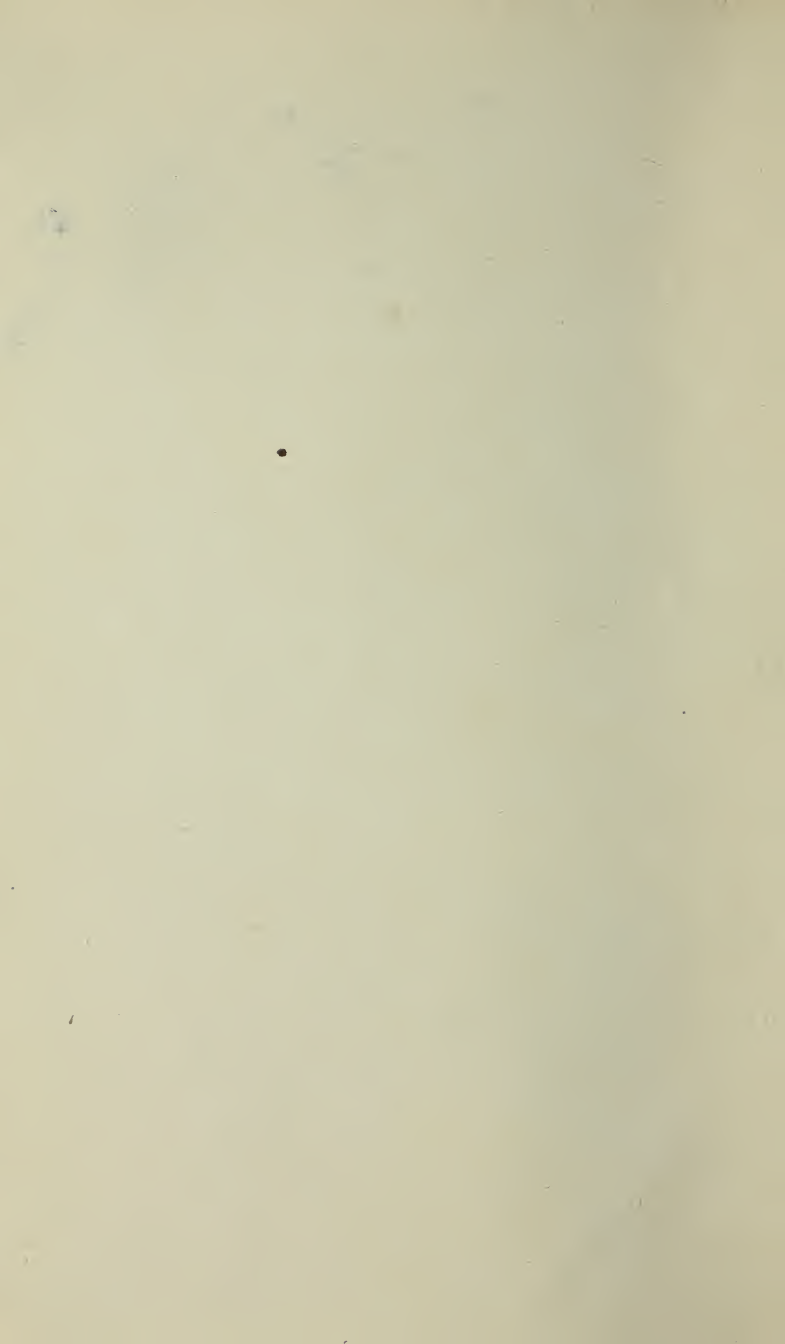
A Queer Dilemma

Effie W. Merriman





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Alternates



LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ALIEN
1919

A Queer Dilemma

AND OTHER STORIES,

—BY—

EFFIE W. MERRIMAN,

Editor "The Housekeeper."

Illustrated by H. B. WILEY.

Copyrighted by Effie W. Merriman, 1898.

MINNEAPOLIS.

THE FRANKLIN TAYLOR PUB. CO.,

1898.

The Housekeeper Corporation,
Printers,
Minneapolis, Minn.

PREFACE.

I, The Author, being in full possession of all my faculties, do hereby solemnly declare that not one of the characters in the following pages, man, woman or child is intended as a study of myself! Neither have I attempted a portrayal of any relative, enemy or friend. I wish to state, furthermore, that the reader is not expected to believe a word of any story in this book. If he does he must assume the entire responsibility. These stories are the nonsensical creations of a mind which cannot be always serious without danger of dislocation! I have had lots of fun writing them, and I earnestly hope that an exceedingly large number of persons may have as much fun reading them.

E. W. M.

177 Feb 40 G. Mrs. J. W. Lloyd

CONTENTS.

A Queer Dilemma.....	1-57
A Twentieth Century Romance.....	58-106
The Tax on Bachelors.....	107-147
A Scientific Courtship.....	148-166
Mr. Dillingham's Correspondent.....	167-188

A QUEER DILEMMA.

It was not that I had grown tired of my wife. I am certain that there has not been one moment since the day of our wedding when I have wished either that I had never met her, or that we might honorably sever our tie of relationship. There has not been a time when I would willingly have caused her a moment's unhappiness. But one can not eat constantly of his favorite dish, or inhale the fragrance of his favorite flower, or read his favorite book, or hear his favorite opera, without longing for a change. And he does not like the favorite less because of the change. It was not that I wished to see less of Angeline, but that I might see more of one who was her exact opposite, that led me to renew my acquaintance with Helen, an old school friend, who had married my chum, and was living with him in a state of happiness not often witnessed in these days of matrimonial infelicities. There was no doubt in my mind that Helen loved her husband; but, like myself, she had grown somewhat weary with the monotony always to be experienced in a state of bliss too nearly perfect to be disturbed by even a disagreement.

Helen and I became companions in a surprisingly short space of time, and Angeline and Helen's husband

looked on and smiled approval. Sometimes they good-naturedly styled us cranks, because we delighted to converse on subjects that had no interest for them; but they were really a little proud of what they chose to consider our peculiarities. It was their perfect confidence in us that set us to devising some scheme whereby we might enjoy each other's society undisturbed by the presence of third and fourth parties—their confidence in us, and their too fond interest in the outcome of our discussions. They liked to listen to us, not because they were in the least interested in what we were talking about, but because they were each eager to have their own particular property say something that would be found quite unanswerable. I have known Angeline to become quite irritable because Helen had advanced some theory that had never occurred to me, and I had admitted it. Naturally, we each tried to be a little brighter than the other, for the sake of the audience, and our conversation became tiresome in consequence, and lost much of the charm it had had during the first weeks of our acquaintance.

I can not remember which of us was first to discover the fact that ours was a friendship too ideal to be spoiled in any such way. It may have occurred to us both at the same moment, as many of our most beautiful thoughts did; but, with the discovery came the knowledge that something must be done about it immediately. The next thought was that, whatever was done, we must manage to avoid any undesirable attentions from Dame Gossip. That would have caused suffering not only to ourselves, but to our companions, and may be set down as proof that, at no time, did we wish to wound them.

Have I said that Helen and I were considered very intellectual? Well, it will bear repeating. The bond between us was entirely different from that which bound her to her husband, or me to Angeline. I have already explained that our companionship carried us to a realm of thought that they could not enter, but their presence caused us one other little annoyance that has not yet been mentioned. It was exceedingly trying, at times, to be obliged to descend from the delectable heights of our fascinating speculations, simply that we might address some commonplace remark to our companions in wedlock, in order to prevent them from fancying themselves neglected. The annoyance grew upon us. Every repetition served to show us how much more advanced we were, mentally, than the life partners we had chosen. A very real danger was before us, and we congratulated ourselves that we were enabled to see it in time to avert it. We must be safe from interruption during such periods as it seemed good and proper for us to be together.

We had gone deep into some branches of the occult sciences. We had had some practical experience in hypnotism; we understood telepathy fairly well, and were thoroughly familiar with the latest discoveries in the methods of astralization. When the thought occurred to us, that, by astralizing ourselves, we might enjoy companionship uninterrupted by the commonplace, we were raised to the seventh heaven of delight, speaking metaphorically, of course. At that time we had not known that there was a heaven of that sort.

Helen's husband had taken Angeline into another room to see a picture which he had just purchased, and

we were alone together. We did not put our new thought into words, for each knew that it had been read by the other. The limited time at our disposal must be given to a discussion of its merits.

"Astralized bodies may go where they will," I began, as soon as the door closed after the retreating couple.

"And Dame Gossip can not follow," replied Helen, unwonted animation in her dark eyes. The fear of what people might say had a restraining influence upon Helen of which I never quite approved. It seemed to me to make her a little too practical, and thus to dwarf an otherwise ideal nature.

"Think of seeing all the places of which we have dreamed—just we two!" I murmured.

"And at so little expense!" added Helen.

"We can stand on the summits of the highest mountains and drink in the beauties around us, knowing that we shall not be brought to the earth by a question as to the height of the mountain in feet and inches. We can bathe in the rays of the setting sun and no one will disturb our revery by asking if those clouds do not look like rain."

"And no one can accuse us of anything improper."

"Of course not. There will be nothing improper."

"Shall we mention it to the others?"

"Better not. They would not understand. It might make them uneasy. They might imagine things that have no foundation in truth. Whatever we do, we do not want them to be unhappy for a moment."

"Of course not," replied Helen, who always appreciated my lofty motives most thoroughly.

"Should we endeavor to secure undisturbed compan-

ionship in this life, both your husband and my wife might fancy themselves slighted."

"They would without doubt," said Helen, "for it would be hard for them to understand how it is possible for us to love them better than anyone else, and still long for the companionship of another. They do not really care to be with anyone but us."

"And yet they know nothing of the delights of true companionship. Fancy them trying to tell why they liked being with us! Poor things! How short have been their voyages into the realm of thought."

Helen sighed, but made no reply. I knew I had voiced her thought.

"Shall we agree to make the attempt?" I asked.

"You mean the attempt to astralize ourselves?" returned Helen. "I cannot see what harm it would do."

"When shall we make it?"

"It must be at night when everyone is asleep."

"It is said that first sleep is usually the soundest. It would be awkward to have one of them try to awaken us. At what hour does you husband retire?"

"At eleven. He is, as a rule, fast asleep by twelve."

"So is Angeline. Shall we make it to-night at twelve?"

Helen agreed, and at that moment we were joined by Angeline and Col. Saunders.

It is, perhaps, needless to say that the remainder of that day was spent in a state of feverish excitement. I had never astralized myself, but I knew so well how it was done that I did not doubt that I should be able to do so successfully, and how great should be my reward for making the attempt! That is, if Helen were also suc-

cessful. I am sure I should never have cared to make the experiment, even to demonstrate a scientific truth, had it not been for my desire to be alone with Helen. That thought was entrancing. Yet I did not love her, and I did love Angeline. It will be hard for anyone, not having had experience, to follow me in my reasoning on this subject, and I should not advise anyone to attempt to gain experience in this line, for there is as much danger of its leading him to the divorce court as there is that wine-tasting will lead to the drunkard's grave. One can never be sure beforehand how much of such experience he can bear unharmed.

That night, when there was not the slightest doubt that Angeline slept, I turned myself on my right side, straightened my limbs, threw back my head until there was not a curve in my spinal column, closed my eyes, and—but there! I must not tell what I did next, or all the world will be astralizing itself, and that would be a pity. I speak the word advisedly, for I am quite sure, now, that astralization is not a safe hobby to ride; that it will, eventually, bring to the rider more, a very great deal more, of unhappiness than pleasure.

I was successful in this, my first attempt, as I had felt confident that I should be. No one, who has not experienced it, can tell what a delicious sense of freedom comes with the laying aside of the body. All know how relieved one feels after divesting himself of cumbersome clothing, and they who can fancy that feeling intensified a million times may have some idea of the rapture that filled my soul as I stood beside my bed and looked down at my body, to all appearances wrapped in the deep sleep of perfect health.

My joy was made perfect when I learned that Helen's efforts had also been crowned with success. We met at her door and resolved to start at once for Italy, where the climate is more conducive to enjoyment in out-of-door life in the middle of December than it is here in Wisconsin.

But a few moments elapsed between the resolution and its realization. The trip was delightful, our only regret being that the speed with which we darted through the air prevented our seeing any of the beauties over and through which we must have passed. We were utterly unconscious of everything save the presence of each other and of the heavy grey mist which enveloped us like a cloud, until we found ourselves sitting side by side on the shore of a beautiful lake in Italy. The exquisite joy of that moment can never be expressed. We were free with a freedom that a soul bound to an unresponsive body can never comprehend. We were filled with an elation that cannot be expressed by any of the clumsy devices by which humanity attempts to make its thought understood. We were enabled to appreciate the beauties of nature as we had never done when we saw them through the eyes of the body; for now even in the humblest weed we saw beauties that we had never before dreamed of its possessing. No words passed between us. We had no need of words, for each read the thought of the other, and thus, in the most blissful silence imaginable, our souls communed together undisturbed by the cares of our everyday existence.

How long we sat there neither knew. We might never have cared, had we not suddenly been brought to a consideration of the present by seeing an Italian peasant ca-



The Flight to Italy.

ressing his smiling wife. Instantly we both realized that we had ties which bound us to earth. I submit this statement in proof that our affection for the partners of our life was every bit as consistent as any reasonable person could ask. Imagine what we were leaving simply to be with them—freedom from everything but the purest mental happiness—and the proof will be sufficient.

We immediately started on our return trip. I left Helen at her door, a half hour later. I waited until she had disappeared through it (she had no need to go to the trouble of opening it) and then betook myself to my own room. My body was just as I had left it, except that it had grown quite cold, and Angeline, half awake, was peevishly asking why I had not warmed my feet before coming to bed. I smiled, thinking how surprised she would be, should she awaken enough to realize that it was four o'clock in the morning.

It was with considerable effort, and not without pain, that I finally took possession of my body again, and before I closed my eyes in sleep, I resolved that I should not again remain away so long a time, unless I could manage in some way to keep my body warm during my absence.

Our experiment had been so entirely delightful, that it is not surprising that Helen and I resolved to repeat it at an early date. We were rejoiced beyond measure on the next day, to find that we could recall all our experiences, and we had great difficulty in keeping ourselves from referring to them, when conversing together in the presence of Angeline and Col. Saunders. But even that difficulty served to add spice to an existence that we had found monotonous, and to draw us closer in the

bonds of a friendship that, in the opinion of ourselves, was more platonic than anything ever conceived by Plato.

I had never been more indulgent to Angeline than I was that day. I even applauded some of her little speeches as if they had contained quite as much beauty and wisdom as my own. I told myself that I loved her better than I ever had before, and gave as a reason that my short visit in a world where she was not had relieved me of the slight nervousness caused by her continual presence, and enabled me to appreciate her worth at its true value. What better proof could I need that I was really doing a kindly act towards Angeline when I allowed my astral to visit other lands with Helen?

In less than a week Helen and I started on our second trip through the atmosphere. A stiff gale was blowing, that we found far from comfortable, and we decided to rise above it, and, hundreds of miles from the surface of the earth, look for a place where our souls could commune together in a state of bliss unbroken by annoying conditions of any sort.

As we had no means of measuring time or distance, I cannot say how long we had traveled when we became aware of voices in our immediate vicinity.

"We are not alone," said Helen, floating closer to me.

"Can Angeline and Col. Saunders be following us?" I asked, a sudden fear assailing me.

"Impossible! They would never be able to astralize themselves. They are entirely too material."

"Oh, to be sure!" I replied, in a tone of the deepest assurance. But I was not quite at rest in the matter. Experience had taught me that, on several occasions, Angeline had proven herself to be possessed of charac-

teristics that I had never suspected, and there was no telling what she might do, should her suspicions become aroused. She might even become an astral. She might teach Col. Saunders how to become one. A woman can teach almost anything to a man who loves her, and I suddenly remembered that Angeline and Col. Saunders had been left alone together many times when Helen and I were deeply interested in some book that they did not care to read, and that Angeline was considered fascinating. I became electric with rage at the thought. I did not want Angeline to be flying over creation with Col. Saunders, or any other man. She could not entertain a platonic affection for anyone, and even if she could, I did not want her to! Was I jealous? Oh, no! I simply knew men better than she could possibly know them. I knew, very well, that there was not a man in the universe, except myself, capable of entertaining a simple platonic affection.

What Helen was thinking all this time I do not know. I might have known, had I not been so absorbed in my own thoughts, and I am sure that she, too, was too deeply buried in contemplation to care what I was thinking. Before we were ready to resume our conversation we found ourselves in a large company of astrals, most of whom were too deeply engaged in their own affairs to know or care that two newcomers had joined them. A glance was sufficient to tell that they were from every country in the world. It seemed to me as if I could hear their voices, and could even recognize the tones of some of them, but of this I can not be sure. My books on the subject of astralization had led me to believe that an astral had no need of voice, since he always converses with

companions by means of telepathy. If that is a fact, I can add one item to the sum of human knowledge on that subject, and that is, that the effect of the tones of the voice are also conveyed telepathically. I am confident that I heard the voices of some of those new acquaintances. What struck me as still more remarkable, I could understand what any one of them said, although, at the same time I was fully aware that many spoke in a language which I had never learned. I glanced at Helen and saw that she was passing through the same sort of experience, and that she was no less astonished than myself.

"Where are we?" I asked of a man who stood near me, surveying the crowd with the far-reaching look of a philosopher. He was evidently a native of Thibet, and you may imagine my surprise when he replied by speaking one word which I cannot reproduce here, but which I at once knew signified a sort of clearing house, where they who are divorced or unhappily married may meet to settle or arrange their matrimonial difficulties. What could a native of Thibet know of the difficulties which civilization has bound upon the back of matrimony so securely that one cannot accept the latter without taking the former also? I had read that, in no country on earth was the marriage relation held in greater contempt than it was in Thibet. If this man were not suited with his spouse, why did he not get another and be forever happy? I asked the Thibetan why he was in such a place as this.

"My friend," he replied, "I have learned that you have a joy which we do not know. I am here to try to comprehend it, that I may return to my body, and teach it to my fellows."

"Judging by the countenances of those whom we see around us," I said, "it seems to me that you have come to a poor place to study joy. What is the sensation to which you refer?"

"In part, that which you now experience," he said, looking me full in the eyes with an expression that I did not like. He appeared to know me better than I knew myself, and that is never pleasant.

"I do not understand you," I said, coldly, moving away from him.

"My friend," he replied, keeping close beside me, "why have you and this lady astralized yourselves? Simply that you may enjoy each other's society without having disagreeable remarks made about you. In my country there would be no talk, and none of the consequent pleasure found in outwitting the talkers. You enjoy a mental exhilaration in running away with another man's wife that I can never experience, unless I can first succeed in convincing my countrymen that such things are wrong."

"You misunderstand us entirely," began Helen coldly, when she was interrupted by a gesture of despair from our strange acquaintance.

"I know I do! I know I do!" he exclaimed; "but I am trying to understand. If I could only experience the feeling that caused that remark—'you misunderstand us entirely!' They all say it! Everyone here has been misunderstood entirely! Everyone says it of himself, and no one believes it of his neighbor, and it seems such a necessary part of the enjoyment! Oh, if I could only comprehend it! You have moral laws made by yourselves which you do not believe in to the extent of obeying, but which you seem to wish others to think you do

obey. If I could once catch and comprehend the spirit that prompts obedience and disobedience in the same breath, my problem would be solved, and then I could have the honor of giving to my countrymen a new form of gratification. Then we in Thibet could have marriages and divorces and elopements and scandals and murders, and life would forever cease to be monotonous."

"See here, sir," said I, thoroughly nettled, "I want you to understand that we are not of these people—"

"Sir," he interrupted, "everyone here has told me precisely the same thing about himself. I have listened to explanation after explanation, but I can see no very great difference. I have reached the conclusion that self-delusion must be a part of the enjoyment, but why? And is it a real delusion? Can't you see that no one believes of you what you believe of yourself, and what you would not believe of another in the same conditions? If it is a real delusion, how do you acquire it? If it is not, what pleasure do you find in it? I should be very glad of a little practical help out of this difficulty."

Helen and I were disgusted. We turned abruptly, and left our obtuse acquaintance. Time was too precious to be wasted on an individual who would not accept us at our own valuation. But we had, for some reason, lost all inclination for each other's society, and made our way homeward at once, arriving two hours earlier than we had done on our previous trip.

How rejoiced I was to find Angeline sleeping as sweetly as when I had left her! I touched her feet and hands and brow. They were warm and slightly moist, like those of a sleeping baby. I knew she had not astralized herself, for she could not so quickly have warmed her body.

Several days elapsed before Helen and I repeated our experiment. They were days passed in the simple delights of home life. We did not see each other. She was content with Col. Saunders and I with Angeline. But one evening we chanced to meet at the house of a friend, and the conversation turned upon a new club that had lately been formed for the purpose of attempting to apply scientific principles to occult studies. Helen was brilliant that evening, and I flatter myself that my conversation was not found uninteresting. It was a pleasure to us both to know what a wealth of experience we might reveal if it were only advisable! We looked at each other and smiled, and without a word having been spoken I knew that Helen would astralize herself that night, and that I should meet her as before. From that moment we became almost reckless, indulging in the delights of astralization sometimes as often as two or three times in one week. I wonder, now, that our companions in wedlock remained unsuspecting as long as they did.

It was through my own stupidity that Angeline first began to suspect that all was not right with me. I was so eager to astralize myself that I did not always wait until she was too sleepy to talk. I know, now, that she asked questions that I did not hear and that she became vexed because I did not reply, and that her vexation finally led to suspicion. If I could only have guessed the state of her mind, before I met my astral foe!

It happened this way: Helen and I had planned to be away longer than usual one night, thinking it would be pleasant to attend a meeting at the astral clearing house, where we enjoyed witnessing the struggles of the poor souls who could not, like ourselves, be content with pla-

tonic friendship. We had, on several occasions, remained away until my body became so cold and stiff that it was extremely unpleasant climbing into it. I dreaded the pain, and on this night induced another astral, with whom I had become acquainted, to take possession of my body, and keep it warm for me during my absence. Helen has since accused me of being less devoted in my friendship than herself, and with justice; for *she* never tried to shirk the pain of climbing into a cold body. I must admit that women are more heroic than men about some things.

We had met a number of astrals on our journeys to different parts of the world; but this one we had met most frequently, and I had remarked the wonderful likeness in form between him and myself. I was quite sure that he would not have the slightest difficulty in taking possession of my body, and I felt no hesitation in asking him to do so because he had told me that he had astralized himself so often that his body had become quite accustomed to doing without him, and would remain warm for many hours. Not only that, but it would warm up almost as soon as he had got into it. I felt that my only source of annoyance would be removed when my body should have become similarly accommodating.

Well, he agreed to my proposition, and I showed him into my body. Helen and I went to the astral clearing house, as we had planned, and had a most entertaining time. Our Thibetan friend did not happen to be present to ask us disagreeable questions, and everyone else was so busy with personal troubles that we were left entirely alone, to our great delight. We really did not care to associate with people who had come here only to plan ways for evading the laws of their country, or to find

some way to compel their friends on earth to regard them with the same measure of respect that had been granted them before it was known that they had not been keeping the laws in as good faith as they had seemed to. We left that meeting with the best sort of an opinion of ourselves. Why could not those other people be more like us!

We returned at the very hour upon which we had agreed. My body was delightfully warm and sleeping soundly. I aroused it by stretching myself across it and causing a cold wave of air to pass into one ear. When my astral friend peeped out, I intimated to him that I was now ready to relieve him. He crept part way out, leaned his astral elbows on my physical head, and to my intense astonishment and supreme indignation, refused to be relieved. Deliberately, fiendishly and decidedly, refused to be relieved!

"Go, get into my body," he said; "I have told you where to find it."

"But I don't want your body."

"So? Well, I do want yours. It is built with a more prepossessing face than mine. It will do you good to learn from experience what it is to go through life with an ugly countenance."

It was in vain that I pleaded with him. He had possession of my body, and I could not get him out. He would not even listen to my entreaties, but darted back in, knowing full well that an astral has no means of communication with ordinary humanity. Again and again I sent cold air into his, or rather my own, ears, hoping once more to provoke him into showing himself; but he deliberately arose, found a box of cotton that I kept

on my dressing-table beside my box of corn-cure, and stuffed both ears so full that not a breath of air could reach him. Then he returned to bed, and was soon in a deep sleep.

I cursed myself for my stupidity with all the vehemence at my command. Fool that I was not to have thought of the difficulties that I might be called upon to encounter, before asking a strange astral to keep my body warm! Once, when a boy, I had asked a stranger to hold my watch while I threshed another boy. When I recovered from the threshing that followed, the stranger with the watch was nowhere to be seen. It taught me a lesson, just as this experience did. I never saw the watch again. It looked very much as if I should never again inhabit my beautiful body. All through life my trouble has lain in locking the barn door just after the horse was stolen.

I finally realized that my efforts to regain possession of my own body were worse than wasted, and that it would be wiser to take possession of that belonging to my enemy, before it became dead, than to run the risk of having no body at all. I consoled myself with the thought that the passion of astralization would soon overcome him, and that, by watching my opportunity, I could slip into my own body during his absence. He had told me where to find his body, and I went to it without further delay.

I found it without difficulty. I looked at it with a growing repulsion that nearly drove me to insanity. As I have said, it was about the size of my own, but, oh! such a face! It made me ache just to think of wearing it. There was not a hair on the crown of the dirty head, and only seven teeth in the repulsive mouth. For sev-

eral minutes I stood there beside that caricature of humanity, trying to summon courage to step inside. I had almost decided that eternal astralization would be preferable, when thoughts of my beloved wife caused me to change my mind. I felt sure that my enemy would never give up my body if I allowed his to die, and of course he would watch the papers for news of it. When I thought of him occupying my home, I was so filled with wrath that I could hardly restrain myself from going back at once and trying to do him some harm. I was only prevented from taking that most unwise step by the thought that I might make my own body so unpresentable that I could never like it again, or worse still, I might be the means of causing my enemy to reside in it for the remainder of his life, just to spite me. Another restraining influence lay in the remembrance that his body was in England, while mine was in Wisconsin, and that I could not take his body across the ocean, because it had no money in its pockets, and I did not know where to find any.

I had hardly adjusted myself to my new quarters, when I was aroused by the entrance of two women into the dingy little room where I was lying. One of them was weeping bitterly. She was a thin woman of most unprepossessing appearance, untidy, unfed, uncherished, undecided, unloved, unnecessary. I could see it all at the first glance through my stubby eye-lashes. She came to the bed and stood looking at me while her companion placed her hand over my heart—I mean, over the other fellow's heart, which my personality had set in motion.

"Why, no, Liz!" exclaimed the other woman, in sur-

prised displeasure, "Jack ain't dead. There hain't no sech good luck as that for you this time."

The woman used the pronunciation of the uncultured English; but, as I have not heard it since my terrible experience, and had never heard it before, I must be excused from trying to reproduce it here. The above attempt ought to convince you, as it does me, that I can't do it. I promise you that, in all other respects, my story shall be properly realistic.

The woman who wept, Liz by name, was evidently the wife of my enemy. She threw herself upon me with such force that I gasped for breath, and then, oh, horror! she began covering my face with kisses. For the first time I rejoiced that I wore the face of another. To be kissed by that woman—then I remembered the appearance of the face she was kissing, and remained passive. If she wanted to do it, she certainly ought to have the privilege! It surely could be no worse for one than for the other.

All this time I had kept my eyes nearly closed. I knew they thought me unconscious, and I was thus enabled to gain time in which to try to collect my thoughts, and decide on a course of action.

Soon a doctor came into the room, and the woman exclaimed to him that Jack was not dead after all. The one who was not Liz added, "More's the pity," and won a measure of my respect by so doing. The doctor asked Liz some questions, and so I ascertained that I had often had these queer spells and that I sometimes lay for hours at a time like one dead. This information filled me with joy. I now felt sure that my enemy was a confirmed astralization toper, and I believed that it would not be long

before he would leave my body for another trip through the atmosphere.

"How does he appear when he becomes conscious?" asked the doctor.

"Just as ugly as ever," replied the woman who was, evidently, a sister to Liz. "He'll look like a dead man one minute," she continued, "and I'll begin to have some hope that Liz is going to have a chance for her life; but the next minute he'll sit up and begin to swear, and, like as not, he'll knock her over the head with a boot-jack."

Liz wept silently. It was disgusting enough to think of her kissing such a face as I wore; but to have her weep for me when I had knocked her over the head with a boot-jack was simply unendurable. I despised her from that moment, and longed to tell her so. Then I thought of Angeline. Suppose that brute, who had possession of my body, should awaken and knock Angeline over the head with my boot-jack! Suppose he should swear at her! She had never heard me swear. Indeed, I had never spoken to her unkindly but once in my life, and that was when she had used my razor to chip dried beef. Then I told her, calmly but firmly, that if she ever did such a thing again I would finish dulling the razor by hacking her poodle into inch bits. I was sorry for it afterward, however, and bought some ribbon which I tied in as pretty a bow as I could make on the handle of the razor; then I gave it to Angeline to keep purposely to chip dried beef with. I bought a fine new razor for myself, which I kept under lock and key.

Now, as I lay there in that miserable English cabin, with those two miserable women near me, I thought of Angeline, and wished I had not said a word about the

razor, and that I had left the new one where she could find it in case the other was lost or dulled. I did not open my eyes. Tears from the eyes of the affectionate Liz made my borrowed face uncomfortably damp, but it was better than to open my eyes to a situation that would very likely be worse than anything I had yet experienced. Oh, how I wished I had never astralized myself. I even went so far as to wish that I had never seen Helen. If it had not been for her, I meditated, I should never have been made to suffer as I was suffering now. What right had she to lead me into temptation! Angeline and I were as happy as turtle doves until she came between us. I had never loved her, and never gave her any opportunity to think I did, and none but an unwomanly woman, a very unwomanly woman, would accept such attentions as I had offered. I was sure that nothing would ever have induced Angeline to go sailing through the atmosphere with any astral but mine; but Helen was absolutely devoid of delicacy. It was so easy for nice men like myself to be taken in by a designing woman! We were not expecting such things. How I did wish that I had not been quite so innocent!

I wished a great many things, as I lay there, and it may be that the tenor of my thoughts was not as it would have been had my mind had its own brain to work with. I gradually discovered that my strongest wish was that Liz would use a pocket handkerchief when she wept, or else stop kissing me.

"Don't take on like that," said the doctor kindly. "I think he'll be himself again in a little while. He has only been a little drunker than usual."

"Indeed, indeed, sir," said Liz, with pathetic earnest-

ness, "he was not drunk this time. He never has these spells when he has plenty of money to spend in whiskey. I've seen him drunk many and many a time, and I know these spells are different."

The doctor smiled, and said something to the sister which I did not catch. It was evident that he was very sure that Jack was drunk, and I presume he would have been just as sure had I opened my eyes and given him a truthful account of what had happened. When you want to study a class of humanity more non-progressive, according to its opportunities, than any other class except preachers, find a specimen of the ordinary doctor. It won't take a very large microscope to cover him, and you'll find him amusing.

"Liz puts me out of all patience," said the sister. "I can't imagine how she can be fool enough to care for a man who treats her as Jack has done. I'd have killed him long ago and fed him to the hogs!"

How I did wish that she, instead of Liz, had been his wife. In all probability she would never have allowed him to live long enough to learn how to become an astral, for she certainly looked capable of carrying out any threat she might chance to make.

"I really believe you would," replied the doctor, with a little laugh of amusement. "Well, there does not seem to be much that can be done to arouse him, so I may as well go home. I think he will behave himself before long. If he becomes worse, however, send for me."

Send for him, indeed! What could he do?

When the doctor had left, the sister, whose name was Jane, persuaded Liz to go out and have a cup of tea, and I was alone. I arose, immediately, and began to dress,

I had no idea as to where those women had gone for their tea, or how long they would be gone; but of one thing I was very sure: I must get away from them just as quick as the Lord would let me. I felt that I would be a failure should I try to personate Jack, except in personal appearance, and there was no telling what might result should it be discovered that my nature was not what it had been. It might work Liz up to a height of affection that would induce me to kill her! I could not beat her over the head with a boot-jack, as I knew I should be expected to do, or swear at her, or drag her around the room by her little wisp of uncombed hair, or do any of the other things which Jane had enumerated as being among my favorite methods of diversion. Had I known just how Liz would have regarded my conversion to a better life, I might not have felt so uneasy. But if I should be the means of leading her to renewed efforts in the art of weeping—should she fall on my neck and weep, or hold my head on her bosom while she wept into my face, or let her tears drop steadily on my bald crown, or attempt any of the styles described in books that discuss such topics—Oh, heavens! the very thought lent speed to my movements. I had had more than enough of the damp Elizabeth.

I cautiously made my exit through a back window, and went out from the smoky, foggy town, after having taken the precaution to inquire what was the number of the house I had just left, and the name of the man who occupied it.

I learned that I was wearing the body of one Jack Walsh, as useless a piece of humanity as ever cumbered the earth. My informant also told me that I looked

enough like him to be his twin brother, and that he should have taken me for Jack, himself, if I had not been so much more civil spoken. He even went so far as to dare me to bet the treats that I was not a relative. I thought of the poverty of my pockets, and declined with thanks, and he went to tell his comrades how he had discovered a brother of the worthless Jack Walsh.

I went out into the country and threw myself under a tree, where I felt quite sure I should be free from intruders. I had decided to astralize myself again and endeavor to discover what was going on at home. I could think of no better way in which to spend my time while waiting for my own body to be vacated. All I would need to do would be to keep my borrowed body alive, and finally leave it where I found it, that, in case its rightful owner wished to claim it, he would have no excuse for troubling me further.

When my astral body entered my pleasant Wisconsin home, the clock on the mantel pointed to twenty minutes to twelve o'clock a. m. I went directly to the room where my wife and I slept. It was darkened and Angeline lay stretched on the bed. A nurse, a doctor, and several weeping relatives stood over her. I saw Helen enter the room. She, too, had been weeping. I looked for my enemy, but, to my great relief, he was not present.

"How is she?" asked Helen, bending over Angeline.

"I think she will live," replied the doctor gravely; "but it will be a long time before she fully recovers. It was not the blow that prostrated her, so much as the thought that her husband could strike her."

Then that villain had used my boot-jack on Angeline! I was wild with indignation, but what could I do? Sim-

ply nothing. I was far more powerless than the gentle breeze that fanned the pure brow, across which were the ugly blue traces of the boot-jack.

"Mr. Scranton is not himself," said Helen. "I have just had a talk with him, and I know he is not himself."

"He says he is sorry he did it," said Angeline's sister Miriam, "but he does not seem to feel one bit as I should imagine a man would feel who had nearly killed his wife—that is, if he cares for her at all. I have sometimes had my doubts about that, however."

Oh, how vindictive these sisters-in-law can be on occasion!

"I, too, have noticed his apparent indifference," said the nurse. "It strikes me that he does not care, and I have seen enough of human nature to be able to judge fairly well."

Have you ever noticed that when a nurse has passed her thirty-fifth year she is always sure that she has seen enough of human nature to be able to judge anything? Evidently this one was no exception. "I should not be at all surprised," she added, with cast-iron assurance, "if there were another woman in the case."

Helen looked daggers at the woman, but she was not in the least discomposed.

"What right have you to insinuate that anyone could supplant Angeline in her husband's affections?" demanded Miriam. "He may not have loved her as she deserved, but he certainly could not have cared for anyone else after having seen her."

"When you have seen as much of the world as I have," replied the nurse, "you will learn to expect anything, and be surprised at nothing. If you are wise and wish to

avenge your sister, you will quietly begin searching for particulars concerning Mr. Scranton's most intimate lady friend. Employ a detective."

My most intimate lady friend! I thought of Helen at once, and wished for the power to gag that evil-minded nurse with her own detestable wig. With the prophetic vision of an astral I could see dire complications before unthought of. Nothing could have been purer than the feeling Helen and I had entertained for each other; yet, with a few infernal hints, I knew that hag could blacken us in the eyes of the world forever. While I might be able to endure such unjust and undeserved punishment, I did not want the peerless Helen to suffer also. It will be observed how differently I thought of her as an astral than when using the brain of my enemy.

If I could only have made my presence in the room felt by some of them! I exerted myself until it seemed as if my soul was about to leave its astral covering; but every attempt was in vain. I bent over Angeline and pressed kisses on her lips and cheeks and eye-lids, and on the cruel bruise across her brow. I felt so intensely, that it seemed impossible that she should not feel my influence, and I tried to make her know that it was not I who was in possession of my good-looking exterior; but, so far as I could discover, I made not the slightest impression upon her. She finally regained consciousness, only to break into a violent fit of weeping, which, in spite of the efforts of the doctor and attendants, ended in another period of unconsciousness. I knew that she had heard the nurse's remark, and that her first thought had been of Helen, as the particular friend under discussion. I felt that Helen knew it, too, and that her heart was

nearly broken. She had meant no harm. She had really believed that ours was a friendship that could have no disastrous consequences. The awakening was horrible. She left the room without a word, and I followed her. I could not stay longer where I must be a helpless witness of Angeline's sufferings.

Helen went into the library, where my enemy was sitting in my body.

"My dear friend," she said, "tell me why you have so changed. Have I anything to do about it? It would kill me to think that I had come between you and your wife. I thought you understood that my friendship for you was purely platonic. Was yours for me not the same? Oh, tell me that it was. Tell me that I have not been mistaken in you. There have been such friendships—ours was platonic—"

"Platonic fiddlesticks!" replied my lips, with a rough oath and a rude laugh. "You and I know better than that, my dear. Any man might be proud to love a woman like you. What should he care for friendship?"

For a moment I thought Helen would faint, she became so deathly pale. She felt her way to the window, as if she had been blind, and leaned for a moment against the casement. I stood beside her and tried to whisper in her ear. It seemed to me that she who had so long made a study of the science which had brought all this trouble upon us might be influenced by me to guess the true state of affairs; but whether I made any impression upon her or not, I could not tell. She turned once again toward my form.

"Mr. Scranton," she said with a meaning look toward the box of cigars and the bottle of brandy on my study

table, "will you kindly tell me how long it has been since you began to smoke and drink?"

"Egad!" exclaimed my lips, with a repetition of the brutal laugh, "I should think it had been some time since I left off, judging by the difficulty I had in finding anything to drink or smoke, and the beastly state my stomach is in."

Although Jack's borrowed stomach had not craved whiskey or tobacco, the degraded mind he had lent the brain was accustomed to considering it the highest form of enjoyment, and he had ordered a fine supply immediately upon awakening. The poor stomach was rebelling, and Jack was not so happy in his new surroundings as he might otherwise have been.

Helen left the room without another word. I could not accompany her, for I knew that I must return to that detestable body which I had left under the trees in that miserable English wood and warm it up enough to keep it alive. I was nearly crazed with apprehension. It was clear to me that it had been a long time since my enemy had had money with which to buy brandy and tobacco in sufficient quantities to satisfy him, and I dreaded the effect of his indulgence on my poor body, almost as much as I worried over the damage he would do my reputation. And would he ever again astralize himself? Might he not find his present life so much to his liking that the joys of astralization would be weak in comparison? I believe that no one deliberately astralizes himself who does not hope to enjoy some pleasure that would not otherwise be his, and which seems greater than anything yet experienced. What could astralization give to such a man as Jack Walsh that he would find preferable to the

life I had led? I had never so fully realized the extreme desirability of my lot in life, as I did now that I seemed to be shut out from it forever.

Had hope entirely deserted me, however, I should never have returned to my enemy's body. I mean I should never have gone in search of it; for, when I arrived at the place where I had left it, it was gone. Not a trace of it was to be seen. What had become of it? My astral grew stiff with the agony of terror. It was horrible to be obliged to warm such a body into life, but it was more horrible to be deprived of the privilege of so doing. Had it been eaten by wild beasts? Was there in England any wild beast hungry enough to touch it? Was it in the hands of medical students? That seemed more likely. Medical students are certainly less fastidious than any wild beast of which I had ever read. Should I begin my search in the morgue? I knew so little of the life of such men as Jack Walsh that I could not at once decide upon a proper course to pursue, and I felt that I had little time to lose, for that pesky body could not live forever, and I had already been away from it for many hours.

I finally decided to go back to Liz and her sister, trusting to gather from their conversation some news of the whereabouts of Jack's body. As good luck would have it, it was being carried up the steps in a long black box just as I arrived.

Jane opened the door.

"Well," she said, in a tone of extreme satisfaction, "I fancy he's dead enough this time! I hope so, at any rate."

"Dead as a door nail," replied one of the men who carried the box.

I almost collapsed from discouragement. I had not thought that I could feel so badly at the mere suggestion that I might nevermore be able to climb into that unpleasant body.

"It will be hard on his wife, won't it?" asked another of the men.

"I presume it will, just at first," replied Jane; "but she'll get over it, when she knows he is dead for sure. It is the luckiest thing that ever happened to her, I can tell you that."

"Shall we leave the body in this box?"

"Is it the cheapest box you have?"

"No."

"Take it out and bring a cheaper one. He doesn't deserve any at all. If it were not for Liz I would sell him to a medical college, and try to get back a part of the money he owes me."

The men took the body from the box, greatly to my relief, laid it on a board, and left it.

Liz came in and threw herself upon it, and began to weep into its face and press moist kisses upon it with her ugly lips. I looked on, and hesitated. Could I endure that? It was bad enough just to see it done, when the face had no feeling. But to have it animated by my personality—faugh! it made me sick. However, it was my one hope of ever again enjoying Angeline's companionship on earth. That thought decided me, and, without further hesitation, I climbed into the body. It was so stiff and unyielding that I feared I should never be able to adjust myself to it. It seemed to me that long hours

passed before I was enabled to warm any portion of it into life, and I looked with horror upon the preparations that were being made for its burial. I even began to long for the presence of Liz, when she was away from me; for I felt that she would be most likely to detect signs of returning life. As for Jane, I was equally certain that, should she detect such signs, she would only hasten the funeral ceremonies.

It may seem a paradox when I tell you that it was a joyous moment for me when Liz pressed her lips against Jack's cheek (I will not call it mine even for the sake of perspicuity), felt that it was warm, kissed it again, and, with a wild shriek, fainted away upon Jack's bosom. I felt that I should die of collapsed anatomy if I did not get her off, for I had allowed Jack's body to go so long without food that it would not stand everything. I made a superhuman effort, gave a convulsive twitch, and sent Liz flying to the floor. At this moment Jane entered the room and Liz revived.

"Oh," exclaimed Liz joyfully, "Jack is not dead! My poor, dear Jack is not dead! He knocked me down, Jane; as sure as you live, he has knocked me down once more!"

"And you rejoice!" exclaimed Jane, contemptuously.

"Why, why, Jane," faltered the poor thing, "it was awful to have Jack dead!"

I sat up, ready to defend myself in case the belligerent Jane attacked me. There is no safety for a man like Jack in the presence of a sister-in-law like Jane, except that afforded by her love for her sister or the strength afforded by a superior physique.

"You miserable reprobate!" she said sternly.

To be entirely truthful, I must say that her words were not quite as classic as those I have used, but mine look better in print. Her attitude was enough to make even the alphabet sound threatening from her lips.

"Why couldn't you have died, when you had so good a start?" she asked.

"It may be," I replied, with a sarcasm that must have been ludicrous under the circumstances, "it may be that it is because you showed too much anxiety on the subject."

Jane stared in astonishment.

"Well," said I, as roughly as I could, "what are you staring at? Am I more beautiful than usual?"

Jane still stared, and I began to fear that I had not been entirely successful in my attempt to personate Jack. I longed to do it well, for something told me that Liz would never dare kiss Jack unless she believed him to be unconscious. I must not hesitate, but essay still greater coarseness.

"See here, my beauty," I continued bravely, "I want you to trot to the kitchen, without loss of time, and get me something to eat. D'ye hear me! Get it quick!"

"Oh, Jack," wailed Liz, "you are not yourself, after all! Oh, my pretty Jack, are you going to die and leave me?"

And this after I had tried my best to be a brute! Liz threw herself into my arms, and her huge tears rolled down my neck. It made me mad, and I threw her from me again, with such force that she staggered.

"Stop that infernal nonsense," I thundered, "and bring me something to eat."

"I have no money," wailed Liz. "You know you have done no work for months."

"Where do you get food?"

"Jane gives it to me."

"Then Jane must bring some to me."

"Never!" exclaimed Jane, with fierce determination. "I would rather see you starve."

"You shall be paid for it, you fool! Do you think I want to beg— Keep off! Keep off, both of you, or I'll kill you deader than smelts."

Evidently Jack had not been in the habit of suggesting that he might pay for food, and so, notwithstanding my resolution not to do so, I had represented him as a convert to a better life. Both women showed unmistakable signs of an intention to rush into my arms and weep on my neck, and I only saved myself by springing to my feet and assuming the attitude of a prize fighter.

To my intense joy the food was brought without further parley. It consisted of a bowl of oatmeal porridge and a slice of black bread without butter. It did not look at all tempting, but I recollected that Jack's body was in need of nourishment, and was, in all probability, used to nothing better.

"Will you tell me," I said, swallowing the broth as I would swallow medicine, "what sort of work a man like me can get to do?"

Liz made a rush for me when I asked the question, and I backed against the wall and held the bread as if I would hurl it at her.

"Keep off, Liz!" I shouted. "If your dripping face comes within five feet of mine, I'll mash it flat."

It was harsh language to use to a woman, and one of

the most steadfast of her sex at that, but I was desperate.

"Let him alone, Liz," said Jane. "If he is thinking of going to work, for pity's sake don't distract his mind."

Then Jane turned to me.

"I know of several warehouses that need sweeping," she said. "I'll get the work, you may do it, and I'll take in the cash."

"Indeed! Why can't I handle my own cash?"

"Yours! You have a number of debts to pay before anything could be yours by right. If you get one penny of it you'll never pay me a cent for what I have done for you and Liz. I'll let you know that I was not put into this world just to keep you from starving."

I finally consented to Jane's arrangement, greatly to her surprise, and spent that day in sweeping warehouses. I felt that I could not be under obligations to a woman for food, even though it was not my own body that I was trying to keep alive, and I had no idea where a man like Jack would find work. I could do no better, until I became used to my strange surroundings, than to let Jane run me. She softened perceptibly, when she saw how faithfully I applied myself, and fed me well. That was what I wanted. I had decided to get Jack's body in good working order, and, if I could not obtain possession of my own body, I meant to work my passage to my old home, and choke the last spark of life out of it, and then cut Jack's throat. By so doing, I should relieve Angeline of the presence of my enemy, and do no harm to Liz. I realized that such a deed would hasten my departure into the next world, but I believed that I

could not be forever punished for an honest attempt to right a wrong.

That night, after eating a hearty supper, I slipped out of the house, unobserved, and again started for the country. I could not make up my mind to share a room with Liz, even though I intended to leave Jack's body as soon as possible. I hid myself under an overhanging rock beside the sea, and freed my astral body from its detested covering as speedily as possible.

I went straight to my own dear home. It was closed and dark. I searched every room. All were empty save one, which was occupied by the housekeeper. I went to the barn. The horses were there, and the coachman slept soundly in his snug room overhead. I went back to the house and tried to find some scrap of paper that should tell me what had happened, but in vain. I next went to the house occupied by Angeline's father. There, in the room in which she had slept when a girl, I saw my wife. The lamp burned dimly, and a nurse sat beside the bed. I breathed a prayer of thankfulness that Angeline had been removed from the presence of my enemy, even though I realized that I might find it difficult to win her back again. It was evident that, woman-like, she had resented the treatment of her supposed husband, and gone home to mother.

But what had become of my body? I went to Helen's room. She lay quietly beside her husband, who had raised himself upon his elbow, and was studying her face with great earnestness, and perplexity. He spoke to her, but she made no reply. He shook her, but she did not awaken. I saw, at once, that she had astralized herself, and that Col. Saunders had discovered that she was in

an abnormal condition. Although exceedingly anxious to know what he would do next, I felt that I could not remain longer where I was.

I did not doubt that Helen had made an appointment with my enemy. Perhaps she was with him, now. In all probability the passion of astralization had become so strong that she could not overcome it, even though she had learned to hate her old friend and companion. If I could only know how long she had been astralized, and in which direction she had gone. I did not like to think of her as being with my enemy, still I could not be quite sorry, for of course she would at once understand the true condition of affairs, and she might help me out of my fearful predicament. What next? *What next?* Oh, if I could only know what next to do! Should I try to find Helen, or would it be better for me to remain where I was, and await her return? It was agony to believe that my body was somewhere, untenanted, and I did not know where. Oh, if I could only know its whereabouts! How soon would I try to straighten out this tangled web that threatened to strangle earthly happiness forever, so far as I was concerned!

I decided to leave Col. Saunders, and go to our most dearly loved haunts, hoping to find Helen. I had gone but a little distance from her house, when I came face to face with the astral of my enemy.

"Where have you left my body?" I asked fiercely.

"I will tell you that when I am ready to give it up," was his insolent reply.

I have since thought that the worst part of being without a body, is one's inability to stand up to a good square fight, and that is my only objection to being an angel.

Should I meet Jack Walsh in heaven, I know I should ache to thresh him.

"Bye-bye, Sonny," he said, with a leer. "Kiss Liz, for me, and mind you keep my body in good repair."

He floated off, and I decided to follow him, and take my chances as to getting into my body first. I have always been noted for quickness of motion, and I felt sure that, with any show at all, I could beat Jack in a race through the atmosphere. If I failed, I should at least have the satisfaction of seeing my beloved body, and knowing where to look for it another time. But Jack divined my thought, and immediately turned to me.

"Old fellow," he said, "you'll be sorry if you attempt that. I shall not go near your body as long as you follow me. If it dies I don't care. You have probably inhabited mine long enough to know that it can make little difference to me whether I ever see it again, or not. I might as well be an astral for the rest of my life anyhow."

He had me in his power, and knew it. I turned away, without another word, unwilling to do aught that would imperil my precious body. Without doubt the life of an astral was preferable to that led by Jack Walsh, but it was not more desirable than that to which I had been accustomed.

I searched for Helen as long as I dared leave Jack's body, but in vain. I returned to the spot where I had hidden the body. This time it had not been molested, and I crept into it, warmed it up, and wearily dragged it to the poverty stricken home of Jack Walsh. The sun was just rising, when I entered the room, but the brisk Jane was already about her work.

"Good morning," said I.

"Humph!" was her reply. "Well, you certainly have not been on a spree this time, for, thanks to my good sense, you had no money. Do you mean to work to-day?"

"Yes," I replied, knowing that it was the only chance I had to keep my borrowed body alive. It seemed to me that it required more food than three such bodies ought to need.

"Liz is in the next room. She sat up all night waiting for you, and has only just dropped asleep."

"Let her sleep. I'll work, and you may give her all I earn except just what is needed to buy food enough to keep me from starving, but I'll be blest if I ever want to see her again."

"Jack, what has got hold of you?"

"That is none of your business. Come, let's have breakfast, and be off as soon as possible."

"There were men here to see you last night. Did you expect them?"

"No."

"One was short and—"

"I don't care anything about them. Are you ever going to get ready?"

"I fancy they meant you no good. Have you been getting yourself into trouble?"

"Not in any way that you can understand."

"Well, here's your breakfast. I have engaged sweeping enough to keep you busy all day."

I ate my breakfast, and went to work. I was glad to work. Do you know, I have since reached the conclusion that there are many idle people who would be glad to make themselves useful, if they were not afraid of soil-

ing their precious bodies, or of making them crooked, or otherwise unpresentable. I had always hesitated about doing anything that would harden my hands or make them rough, but I did not care a penny for Jack Walsh's hands. In fact, I gloried in the knowledge that they were getting some quite unaccustomed blisters on them, and proving themselves of greater use than anyone had ever suspected they could be. I proved to be a source of greatest surprise to anyone who had ever known Jack Walsh. Jane collected my earnings as before. At noon she offered me a pint of ale, but I refused it. Then she went to a shop, and bought a really good dinner for me. She said she was almost ready to believe that Liz had known me best after all, and in many ways she showed that her opinion of me was rising. But she did not trust me with one penny of the money I had earned.

About the middle of the afternoon, a sheriff and posse called upon me.

"Are you Jack Walsh?" asked the sheriff.

"I am supposed to be."

"That does not answer my question. Are you Jack Walsh? Yes or no."

"Yes."

I did not like to say it, but what else could I have said?

"I believe you lie."

I agreed with him, but did not say so.

"This is the same fellow who asked me where Jack Walsh lived," said a man in the crowd, whom I recognized as the one who had dared me to bet the treats that I was not a relative of Jack Walsh.

"Oh, Jack, Jack, what have you been doing now?"

Liz pushed her way through the crowd that had rapidly collected around me, and attempted to throw herself into my arms. She was weeping, and her lips were puckered ready for kissing.

"Get out of here!" I shouted. "If you touch me I'll kill you!"

"For shame!" said the sheriff.

"Kiss her yourself, if you think it is any fun," I retorted.

"That is not Jack Walsh," said a voice in the crowd. "He was mean enough, the Lord knows, but he never refused to let his wife kiss him."

"How long has he been like this?" asked the sheriff of Jane.

"Since early yesterday morning."

"Not once allowed Mrs. Walsh to kiss him?"

"Not if he could help it."

"My man," he said, turning to me, "I guess you have not lived with Mrs. Walsh long enough to know her many good qualities. You may come with me."

He spoke with an air of complacency that made me long to knock him down; but something told me that I might as well go quietly, for I certainly could not be in a much worse position than I was.

I was taken before a judge and examined, and it was proven beyond the possibility of doubt that I was not Jack Walsh. I could not answer the simplest questions about the former life of that individual. I did not know how many little Walshes I was responsible for, how many had died, how many were boys, nor which ones belonged to my first wife. Neither could I tell whether that

wife had been separated from me by death, or divorce. It was plain that I was not Jack Walsh; then who was I? That was the question which my tormentors tried to answer. I looked like him, they said, but that proved nothing. Jane and Liz had never heard him mention a brother; but Jane said that she should not be in the least surprised to learn that I, and twenty others just as mean, were related to Jack Walsh. Jack was quite despicable enough to have any number of disreputable relatives, and nothing could be worse than she had all along suspected.

I was arrested for murdering two women in White-chapel. I was supposed to be Jack the Ripper, and there was every reason to believe that I should be hung. The problem that now presented itself was this: Could Jack's physical body be hung without rendering my astral body useless? It did not seem possible. I was loath to have my soul separated from my astral body, not only because of a strong personal desire to spend a few more years on earth, but because of poor Angeline. My poor, poor Angeline! She had thought she did so well in marrying me, and how cruelly Jack Walsh was disappointing her! Would she ever again learn to trust me implicitly? What would life be if she were never to give me her confidence again? I could not deny that I had not always deserved it. I knew she would never have given her consent to my going anywhere alone with Helen, even in astral form, yet I had gone. I had meant so well that I had not seen things in their true light. Besides, how was I to know that my little escapade would end so disastrously? All I had thought about it was that no one could possibly know anything about it.

Thoughts of Angeline were curiously mixed with my

anxious plans for escape, all during that day. What should I do? It would be useless to astralize myself, just before execution, for they would not hang an inanimate body. They would try to restore me to consciousness, hang me if successful, and bury me if unsuccessful. News travels fast, if it be at all sensational, and I saw that I could not hope, now, that Jack would deliberately return to England to take possession of a body that was soon to be hung, when he could just as well occupy a more desirable one in Wisconsin. The situation was, indeed, most desperate.

Gradually the crowd of curious faces began to grow less dense, and finally I was left alone in my cell. Without loss of time, I stretched Jack's tired body on the iron pallet, and allowed my astral to escape and speed its way homeward. I had not gone half the distance, when I again met Jack.

"Do you want your body, now?" he asked, abruptly.

"May I have it?" I replied, breathing a prayer that I might be prevented from saying anything that would be likely to arouse his opposition, and cause him to change his mind, if he really meant to return my body.

"You may have it. I don't want it any longer. Confound such a family as yours, anyhow! You have not taught your women to treat men with the respect due their superiors, and there is no living with them in any sort of comfort. My old woman is better trained. Well, good-by. I presume I shall find my body at the same old place, shall I not?"

I was tempted to say yes. Then I thought how it would be should he fail to find it until too late, and conclude to have vengeance by becoming my evil spirit.

I had no doubt that he could easily make life a burden to me. This thought brought my better self to the front, and I speedily became too honorable to allow him to leave me under a wrong impression. Never in my life did I fight such a battle against temptation. I trust that that one victory has been considered great enough to wipe out a large number of my sins of omission.

"No, Jack," I replied, feebly, "I have not been able to leave your body just where I found it; but I hope you will believe that I did my best to care for it properly."

"Where is it?"

For several minutes I could not speak. So many conflicting thoughts were struggling for mastery in my mind, that Jack could read none of them. I finally summoned courage to tell him that he would find his body in jail, and then silently waited for the words which should tell me that he declined to accept it until it was returned to the place where he had left it. But, to my surprise, he looked eagerly curious, instead of angry.

"Why is it in jail?" he asked.

I told him.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Old fellow, you have done well! that is something I have always longed for, but I couldn't be a high-class villain to save my life."

"Do you mean," I gasped, "that you are willing to be hanged?"

"Of course not, simpleton; but, for a time, I am quite willing to be thought a notorious murderer. Gad, what good times are in store for me! Think of the crowds of visitors I shall have! Think of the fruit and flowers and books and photographs and confectionery that will be showered upon me! Think of the sympathetic ladies

who will write me sweet-scented notes of condolence! Think of those who will fall in love with me, and long to marry me before I am hung! And all the while I shall be well housed and well fed and comfortably dressed, and Liz will have no hold upon me whatsoever."

"But it can not last forever," I said, made reckless by my longing to know more of this strange character. "Sooner or later there will come the hanging—"

"Oh, no danger of that! As soon as it begins to look risky I shall prove that I am myself, not Jack the Ripper. It will be a case for the doctors to study, for it will be proven that, for a time, I forgot every incident of my former life. After I've passed through that stage, I may sue for damages for false imprisonment. Oh, I have excitement enough in store to last a life time. Trust me for getting out of a little scrape like that. Ta, ta, old fellow! Whenever you want some one to keep your body warm, don't hesitate to let me know."

I was so dazed with my good fortune and the fellow's insolence that he had been gone for several minutes before I remembered that he had not told me where to find my body. It was a fearful thought. I realized that it would be useless, as well as dangerous, to try and overtake him, for there was no knowing that he would not change his mind as to the desirability of occupying a body that was in danger of being hanged. When I thought that I might be obliged to hunt for hours for my body, and remembered that it was not one that could live long without the presence of a soul, I was plunged into a state of unhappiness no less hard to bear than that from which I had just escaped. I could think of no better

course to pursue than to go home at once. It was barely possible that I might find my body there.

It was not there. The house was dark, empty, silent as before. Not a clue did it contain as to the whereabouts of my body.

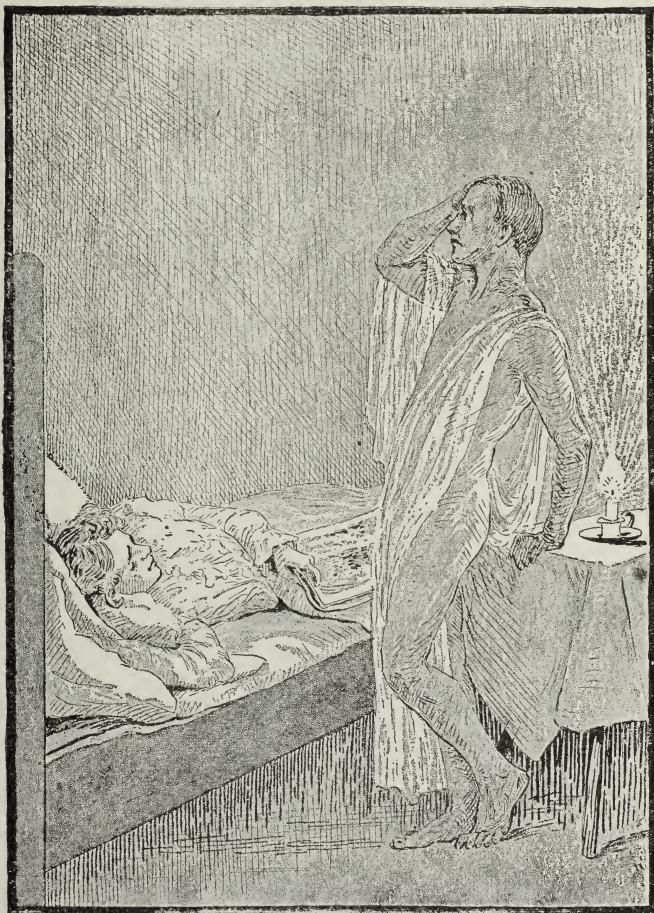
Heavy-hearted, I visited my wife. She lay on the bed where I had last seen her. She seemed to be sleeping soundly, but there were traces of tears on her cheek. In her hand was a copy of the evening paper. I glanced at the words which she had evidently been reading, when she fell asleep.

“SCANDAL IN HIGH LIFE!!!”

Those were the words that I saw, in the most insolent of bold-face type that could possibly have been procured. I read the article through to the end. It told how I, David Scranton, had cruelly beaten my wife, Angeline, with my boot-jack, in the presence of witnesses, and how she had taken the advice of her family and friends and instituted proceedings for a divorce. It hinted that I had long been addicted to the use of liquor, although I had been very successful in disguising the fact, and ended by promising its readers that if they would visit the court house at a certain hour of a certain day they would be regaled with other bits of juicy news concerning the Scranton family, and a certain other family, well known in social circles..

I do not attempt to quote, but simply to give a synopsis of an article that, without doubt, made me the maddest astral in the universe.

I could gain nothing by staying where I was, so I decided to go to Helen's house. Perhaps I might learn something there about myself. If I could only have



I glanced at the words she had been reading.

known how long a time had elapsed since my body had been vacated, I might not have been so worried. It was terrible to think that I might even now be dying. But why should I want to live when Angeline was going to get a divorce? What would life be worth, if it must be lived without her? I had never believed in divorces, and now I was more than ever against a country where the laws made them possible. Why could not Angeline have had more faith in me? So far as she could know, she had had no cause to doubt me. Why could not her love for me have told her that I could not strike her, and be myself? Of course, if she could have known of my atmospherical journeys with Helen, that would, undoubtedly, have caused her to lose faith in me, but how could she know of them? Even if she were told, her limited knowledge of such things would have moved her to say that such a thing was not possible, and I should be saved. I did not want Angeline to obtain a divorce. I believed that if I could obtain possession of my own body, send for her, and let her see that I was my own lovable self, I could easily win her back again, and all would be well forever after.

My first glance at Helen, on reaching her room, told me that she had again astralized herself. I turned to leave the room, and caught sight of a card which she had put in a conspicuous place beside the clock on her dressing-table. It contained the words, "Beside the little lake in Italy."

Like a flash these words illumined my mind. Helen had discovered the fact that a strange astral had possession of my body. She believed that, in my consequent unhappiness, I might visit her, and she had written these

words hoping that I might see them, and join her on the shore of the beautiful lake which our astral bodies had first visited.

My surmises were entirely correct. In less time than it takes to write it, I was floating rapidly through the air, en route to Italy. Very soon, thereafter, I was sitting beside my friend, and we were rapidly exchanging confidences.

"The whiskey and tobacco on your library table first aroused my suspicions," she said, "and I determined to verify them; but I can never make clear to you all that it has cost me."

"All it has cost you!" I exclaimed. "If you imagine you have cause for complaint, think of me. No astral has taken possession of your body."

"But things have happened that are very dreadful."

"What can you mean?"

"My husband has discovered that there are times when I sleep too soundly to be aroused. He talked with medical experts about me, and when last I was astralized, he had them in to examine me."

"Well," I said, "and what good did that do them?"

"It gives them an opportunity to display their surgical skill. They have decided that my brain is inflamed from pressure on a certain portion of it, and that I am a fit subject for trepanning."

"The dev— The wretches! But of course you will not submit."

"Not if I can prevent it; but no one believes my protestations that I am all right. Even now, while I am astralized, they may have my body on the operating table."

It was too horrible to think of. I told Helen that she

must return to her precious body at once, never to leave it again.

"Yes," she replied, "but first I want to see you safely into your own body, else I shall fear that I have run this risk in vain."

"Do you know where my body is?"

"Yes; do not you?"

"No."

"It has been sent up to the workhouse for ninety days for drunkenness."

"It—it has—what!"

"Workhouse — rock heap — drunkenness — ninety days!" explained Helen, most lucidly.

"And that is why that astral villain was willing to give it up! Oh, if I were but in the flesh, and had him in my power!"

"You left his body in jail, my dear friend," said Helen, gently, and my wrath evaporated.

"Eighty-nine days left in which to pound rocks! It was not a pleasant prospect, more especially to one unused to manual labor; but I had to face it. I was allowed a day off, when the time came for me to meet Angeline in the divorce court. Oh, the shame of that moment! My hands, which had been soft and white, when last they clasped hers, were now rough and bleeding, and the dirt was worn into them so deeply that it would not wash off. A bit of flying stone had hit me on one cheek, closing one eye entirely. My clothing hung in tatters. I might have had another suit, by sending to my home for it, but I was too proud to do that. I meant to have wife, home, everything, or—nothing.

The courtroom was crowded. It was proven beyond a

doubt that I had struck my wife with a boot-jack; that I had used violent language to her in the presence of witnesses; that I had shown no concern when she lay suffering from my inhumanity; that I was now serving a term for drunkenness at the workhouse.

There was absolute silence in the room when I took the stand in my own defense. My plan was to prove an alibi, and make Angeline ashamed of herself for believing me capable of such brutality.

I told my story in the most straightforward manner imaginable—just as I have written it here, except that I omitted all allusion to Helen.

It was greeted with a roar of laughter, in which judge and jury joined.

That was not what I had expected. My soul raged with anger and disappointment. My heart sank with an added load of hopelessness; but what could I do? The smiling court officials requested the giggling spectators to restrain their mirth long enough to listen to the decision. In a few moments Angeline and I were not related in the eyes of the law.

I was escorted back to the workhouse.

On the afternoon of the next day I was visited by Angeline and Col. Saunders.

"You!" I exclaimed to Angeline, "you here with him! Is it for this that Helen is to be trepanned—that I have been divorced?"

"How do you know that Helen is to be trepanned?" asked Angeline.

"She told me so herself—" I began, and then stopped, embarrassed. It was supposed that I had not seen Helen

since that operation had been decided upon. My embarrassment was very evident.

"Go on," said Col. Saunders. "You might as well. I know more than you think."

Then I told them that Helen had accompanied me in my atmospheric journeyings, being very careful to make them understand that nothing but platonic friendship, and a deep love of scientific questions, had drawn us together. "You have judged me most unkindly," I added, "but you need not seek further satisfaction in an operation that may cost Helen her life. I suppose, however, it will simplify matters so far as you two are concerned, if she should die under the operation."

"Mr. Scranton," said Angeline, coldly, "do you imagine platonic friendship impossible to anyone except yourself and Helen?"

I saw the point, at once, and said no more; but jealousy burned within me. I had heard of the friendship existing between Col. Saunders and Angeline, and I am free to say that it did not please me to know that she had not found my companionship all-sufficient. I ought to have been glad that he was able to afford her comfort, during the dark days that followed the possession of my body by that astral fiend, but I was not. It seemed to me that her relatives could have afforded her all the comfort she ought to have required.

"Mr. Scranton," said Col. Saunders, "we are here to ask you how much truth there is in that ridiculous story you told yesterday."

"You did not believe me yesterday, and you will not today," I answered, sullenly. "Why should I repeat it?"

"By doing so, you may enable me to reach a conclusion

concerning my poor wife. She tells a story very similar to yours, in which she mentions a family—”

“In England?” I interrupted.

“Yes. She called them—”

“Jack Walsh ; Liz, his wife ; Jane, his sister-in-law.”

“Exactly. Why did you not mention those names in the court room?”

“How in the world could I in the face of that grinning mob ! I talked as long as anyone would listen.”

“That is quite true, my dear friend,” said Angeline to Col. Saunders. “He was stopped by the laughter.”

As it began to look as if my story might be believed, and I might stand before the world as one more sinned against than sinning, I began to lose the air of one crushed by circumstances, and to assume that of proud consciousness of my own worth. I was not slow to perceive that Angeline loved me still, and I was not as sorry as I might otherwise have been to see that she was suffering intensely. I quickly decided that she must make the advances, not I, and I looked forward with considerable satisfaction to the day when I should take her in my arms and tell her that she was forgiven for having shown so little faith in me. I fully realized that my punishment had already been greater than my folly deserved. But I should find some compensation in reducing Angeline to a satisfactory state of penitence for having doubted me for a moment.

Col. Saunders and Angeline left me without making any comment on the story I had repeated, and I went back to the rock heap with hope singing gaily in my bosom. That steps would be taken to procure my immediate release, I had not the slightest doubt. That I

should again be united to my beloved Angeline I was equally sure, and that we should live happily forever afterward was, of course, only a natural conclusion.

I had the somewhat doubtful satisfaction of seeing a part of my story given in the evening paper, with comments by some scientific gentleman who had become interested in it, and a great deal of senseless raillery added by the editor, who was more impressed by the fact that I had gone on my queer journey with a woman who was not my wife, and with whom I had the assurance to pretend I was not in love, than with the scientific aspect of the affair. How did the reporter get hold of that part of it! If there is one class of things on the face of the earth more despicable than every other class, it is known by the name of newspaper reporters. At least, such is my opinion. It will receive the hearty support of every man whose private affairs have been ferreted out and given to the public without his knowledge or consent.

What most interested me was the added intelligence that an expected cablegram would soon prove the reliability of my story, or, at least, that part of it relating to the family in England.

On the next day but one I was visited by Angeline's father, who told me that I was free to leave the workhouse. My story had been verified, and it had been decided that I ought not to be punished for what another had done.

"My daughter wished me to say," continued the old gentleman, "that what communications you have to make regarding your personal effects, now at her house, may be made through the lawyer who procured her divorce."

"Her divorce!" I managed to stammer. "Sir, that di-

vorce is not legal. It was procured on false evidence. It was not I who used the boot-jack—”

“My daughter intends to abide by the decision rendered in the divorce court,” interrupted Angeline’s father, with great firmness. “The fact that you did not find her companionship sufficient, that you willfully deceived her, that you did what you would not have been willing she should do, that you abused her confidence in you, that, worst of all, you ran away with another man’s wife, and her friend—but why enumerate! You can easily see that you have done much that a self-respecting woman would find hard to forgive.”

“But the fact that we went as astrals ought to convince her that she has not good grounds for her jealousy—” I began.

“Nonsense!” interrupted the father. “You know as well as I do that you did not want your wife to accompany you, even as astrals. It was not what you did, but what prompted you to do it, that makes her believe that it is better for both of you never to see each other again. I bid you good afternoon, sir.”

And this was the end of my castle in the air! This was the way Angeline begged for forgiveness! This was the way I was compensated for having been unduly punished! Verily that man is a fool, who, believing he understands woman, dares predict what she will do or say, and act accordingly.

It was some time before I allowed my common sense to control my anger, and give my mind a chance to listen to the promptings of my heart. I believed Angeline had not lost her love for me. She was angry, and I had been wrong; but woman’s love overlooks a great deal. Her

heart would plead for me. I loved her, loved her devotedly. I had won her once before, and I would win her again. At least, I would try.

My first act, after leaving the workhouse, and finding a suitable boarding-place, was to write a long letter to Angeline. I put my whole soul into it. I laid my heart bare before her, and pleaded as I shall never be able to plead again. Scalding tears rolled down my cheeks as I wrote, and dropped, unheeded, on the paper. I allowed them to remain, knowing that it would not be many hours before tears from Angeline's eyes would join them.

The letter was mailed. I could hardly control my impatience while waiting its reply. It came by the next mail. I give it entire.

Dear Mr. Scranton:

I have just finished reading your letter, and it has but added to the terrible ache in my heart. I think my heart will never cease hurting, now. I wish I could forget everything, and go to you; but, because I can not forget, I know we should not be able to live happily together. Your love was my world. I cared for nothing else. I was happy, believing that it was mine, alone, and that you were entirely satisfied with what I gave in return. I would give half my life if my beautiful dream had not been taken from me. I would rather have kept my delusion, until my eyes were opened in heaven, where I might have found relief for my heartache. Oh, if I had not believed in you so completely, it would be easier now! It is not that I do not believe you love me more than Helen, but that I know you did not love me as I thought you did. I can not be satisfied with less than I supposed was mine. It hurts to know that my love was not sufficient. It hurts to know that I was given a divided affection. If you had cared for me as I did for you, you could have had no thought of another. Should we try to live together again, the knowledge that I now have would, sooner or later, be death to our love, and life would become unendurable to us both. I could never again believe implicitly in your protestations, because you deceived me once, and I should always have to fight the thought, "he is deceiving me again." Love can not live where doubt has an abiding-place. My delusion has made me incapable of making the best of the real-

ity. My heart is breaking, but life with you, under the changed conditions, would not heal it. It will be better for us both never to meet again, and I should be glad to hear that you had decided to reside at some distance from this place. A man's heart is not like a woman's, and I think you will not long remain wholly un-comforted. I hope you will not. If you can make yourself another home, I want you to do so. That you might be free to do as you wished in the matter is the reason I applied for a divorce.

Yours sincerely,

Angeline.

And thus it ended. I knew Angeline well enough to believe her entirely in earnest. I knew that I had lost her forever. If I could only have understood her in the first place, as I understood her now, how happy— But this is worse than useless. As I have always done, I attempted to lock the door after the horse was stolen.

A Twentieth Century Romance.

CHAPTER I.

It had been considered a fine house in 1892 when it was finished ready for occupancy. It was built of brownstone, it was large and commodious, it was strictly modern, and it was surrounded by handsome grounds. It was owned by Harlow Winthrop, the wealthiest man in the city. Winthrop was a man who always desired to be identified with everything new, hoping that it might prove to be the avenue down which his name would travel to posterity. He was not contented simply to be rich. He had a fine wife and as nice a family of children as man need wish for, and one of the children, his firstborn, was said to be as much like his father as a half grown English pea is like the matured specimen. This son was named Harold.

The family moved into the new house on the third day of October, 1892, and two weeks later a grand housewarming was given by their friends and neighbors. It was at this housewarming that Papa Winthrop decided to entertain his guests by an exhibition of his knowledge of hypnotism, which was at that time a subject beginning to attract attention among ordinary people.

Winthrop had taken to it with the eagerness and enthusiasm which he had always shown for speculative topics

and for weeks had been practicing on every one whom he could coax, hire or command to submit themselves to his powers. His son Harold was proved to be the most satisfactory subject and therefore afforded his father more pleasure than he had since his birth, twenty-three years before the new house was built. On the evening of the housewarming he came forward obediently at the call of his father and seated himself in an armchair in full view of the assembled guests.

"Now," said Mr. Winthrop, who was pleased beyond measure to have so large an audience, "now I am going to put Harold to sleep for a certain length of time, at the expiration of which he will awaken without assistance, but previous to that time no one can arouse him."

Harold began to stare at the shining stopper of a glass bottle placed between himself and the light, while Mr. Winthrop pressed firmly on a certain spot on the top of his son's head.

"How long shall he sleep?" asked Mr. Winthrop when Harold began to appear drowsy.

"Until eleven o'clock," suggested the mischievous son of the wealthiest family present.

Harold stirred as if to protest, but was too sleepy to speak.

"Yes, make it eleven o'clock," echoed the mother of the mischievous son, not because she cared, but because she always made it a point to insist on the gratification of her son's wishes so long as they did not conflict with her own. The son knew that Letty Mays must return to her home at half past ten, and that Harold Winthrop expected to accompany her. The recollection of that expectation stirred Harold's drowsy brain and prevented him from

submitting to his father's hypnotic power with his usual passivity. It is possible that that is the reason why the exhibition did not terminate according to expectation. There were many reasons given during the years which followed, for at last Mr. Winthrop had succeeded in finding the coveted fame. It was said in those days and has been argued since that the operator in hypnotism must have full confidence in his own power in order to be entirely successful, and the elder Winthrop was certainly not lacking in that respect. He had put Harold to sleep too many times to have any doubts as to his awakening at the appointed time. It was afterward decided that in order to have a successful exhibition it was also necessary that the one who acted as the subject to be operated upon should be free from troubled thoughts when he sat down. Every one said that such a conclusion was proved by the result of Mr. Winthrop's experiment and gave so many reasons why this should be thus that any one who dared acknowledge not having thought of it long before the night of the housewarming was looked upon as an ignoramus. The rich young man was severely condemned for having suggested the hour of eleven as that on which the awakening was to take place, and there were many who went so far as to say he hoped thereby to win Letty Mays himself.

Harold slept well, and the guests amused themselves by trying in various ways to arouse him, but all their efforts were in vain. Pretty Letty Mays, who did not believe he really slept, but thought he had learned to control his features wonderfully well, crept to his side when the attention of the guests was drawn to another part of the room

and whispered in his ear that it was nearly time for her to go. Harold did not stir.

"This is nonsense, Harold," she then whispered petulantly. "I know you are feigning just as well as you know it. If you do not arouse yourself this minute, I shall think it is because you care more for your father's folly than for my wishes."

Harold remained motionless, and Letty hurried into the dressing room, found her wraps, and, disappearing through a side door, went home unattended before any one could guess her intention.

Before she went to sleep that night she wrote a curt note to Harold, releasing him from their engagement and informing him that a messenger would take to him the next day all the books and trinkets which he had given her. But before the things were packed she learned that Harold had not yet awakened, although he had slept for nearly twenty hours, and that the family physician had been called. The physician tried various remedies, none of which proved useful, said he could have done more had he been called earlier, charged a fee large enough to support his entire family for a month, and went home feeling that no man could have acted with greater credit to himself or with greater profit, either, for that matter.

Hours lengthened into days, days became weeks and weeks months, yet Harold Winthrop slept. The elder Winthrop grew thin and white with worry; Mrs. Winthrop became silently accusing and refused to kiss her husband until their son should be himself again; the younger members of the family lost the joy of youth in the heavy cloud which hung over the household; the

servants would not pass at night the door of the silent room where their young master slept.

Five years from the date of the housewarming Mr. Winthrop died, leaving a will so drawn that the bulk of his fortune should be held in trust for Harold, the interest to be enjoyed by those who had the care of him.

After the death of Mrs. Winthrop Harold was given into the care of James, the second son. Thirty-five years later James died, and the fine old home passed into the hands of Henry, who agreed to care for his Uncle Harold to the best of his ability.

Harold still slept. As he needed little more care than the furniture in an unused room, Henry felt that it was as easy a way of earning a livelihood as he should be likely to find. He was forced to own, however, after a few years' experience, that they were wiser who preferred life away from the shadow cast by an uncle who, although not dead, might better have been.

No servant who had heard of the "sleeper"—usually spoken in a whisper by that class—could be induced to enter the house, and they who had not heard of him received information soon after their arrival and left without the customary warning. Young ladies did not care to give themselves to a young man who, for all they knew to the contrary, might suddenly fall into a sleep such as his uncle was enjoying, and Henry might never have married had he not availed himself of the privileges of a matrimonial bureau and done his courting by correspondence.

Henry died in the year 1972, just forty years after assuming the care of his uncle, and his eldest son, James, undertook to fill his place.

CHAPTER II

Twenty years later, in October, 1992, Harold Winthrop awoke, after a refreshing nap of just one hundred years in length. Mrs. James Winthrop had gone into his room that morning with a feather duster, with which she proposed to brush the dust from his face and hands. It was a task which she attended to about once in six weeks. She found Harold sitting up in bed, trying to rub his eyes open. When she entered, he stared at her in undisguised astonishment. So far as he was aware, he was not accustomed to receive lady visitors in that way, especially when they came unannounced. Mrs. James let the feather duster fall to the floor. She opened her pretty mouth, gave one shriek and staggered out into the hall. The servants who heard the shriek sent at once for medical assistance with the beautiful presence of mind which was characteristic of that age. There were some among them who had never before heard a woman scream, and who knew no more about a fainting fit than Harold Winthrop knew about the man in the moon.

James Winthrop, Jr., knew that there must be some good cause for his wife's strange behavior and rushed up the broad staircase. His wife still leaned against the wall. He looked at her inquiringly, and she pointed to the room where Harold had slept, with a manner that seemed to say that poor James was very much to blame about something. Mr. James Winthrop stepped into the room, took one look at his great-uncle and fell in a dead faint to the floor.

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed his wife, stooping over him.

"I should have thought how delicate he is." The servants offered assistance, but she waved them away, and tenderly lifting her little husband into her strong arms bore him to his own room and laid him upon the bed.

Harold had sprung from his bed when he saw her lift her husband. He was not used to seeing a woman do a thing like that, and his first thought was to offer assistance, but his threadbare nightgown fell away from him in shreds, and he quickly crept under the bedding again.

Mrs. Winthrop returned as soon as her husband gave signs of returning consciousness and graciously inquired how she might make herself useful to Harold.

"I should like my clothes, if you please," he replied. "I cannot seem to find them. I thought I left them on that chair."

"Perhaps you did," said Mrs. Winthrop, "but did you suppose they could stay there forever?"

"Have I slept so very late?" asked Harold, who had often made the family and servants extra work by so doing. He thought the lady before him was the new housekeeper whom his mother had talked of engaging and mentally styled her an unusually fine specimen of womanhood.

"Have you slept so very late?" repeated Mrs. Winthrop. "Is it possible that you do not know that you have slept a hundred years?"

"A hundred years! Oh, land o' Goshen!" Harold laughed heartily, then suddenly became serious, believing that his mother's new housekeeper was crazy. "You poor thing!" he said. "Don't mind my laughing. I always did laugh easily. Won't you tell me your name?"

"My name, sir, is Mrs. James Winthrop. I am the wife

of your nephew's son. I do not wonder at your surprise. It must be strange to be suddenly confronted with those who were born and have grown up while you slept. We, however, are no less surprised. We had grown to believe that you would never awaken."

"Great thunder!" exclaimed Harold, who was beginning to be out of patience. "Bring my clothes, madam, or I'll know the reason why! Do you suppose I am going to lie here all day listening to your crazy talk?"

"I shall not compel you to listen to me unless you like," replied Mrs. Winthrop calmly, "but I really do not see but that you must lie here until a tailor can take your measurements and make you some clothes. You have nothing to put on which will hold together. The appearance of your nightgown should be enough to convince you that I am not telling you an untruth."

When Harold stopped to think of it, he was obliged to admit that it was proof that he must have slept longer than he had thought, or that he was the victim of a joke over which he had no control. He concluded to humor the lady and see if he might not find a key to the solution.

"Could you not," he said, "send out and buy me a ready-made suit?"

"It would be impossible to find anything large enough," replied Mrs. Winthrop. "We have no men so large as you. Really you will have to be patient a little while. I have sent for a tailor, who will be here very soon."

A little more conversation followed, which tended to mystify Harold more and more. Then Mrs. Winthrop left the room, and soon afterward her husband appeared in the doorway. Harold recognized him at once as the man who had fainted. He was yet pale, but the excite-

ment of beholding the man who had awakened after a nap of a hundred years had brought a faint color to his lips and a becoming brightness to his eyes.

"He is a dear little thing," thought Harold, "but how much more attractive he would be in skirts!"

The little man came slowly into the room, looking as if he were doubtful as to the wisdom of such a procedure, and Harold hoped that he might prove to be more helpful than his crazy wife had been.

"Good morning, sir," he said pleasantly. "Can you tell me how long I have slept?"

"One hundred years to-day," was the unexpected and highly exasperating reply.

"Another lunatic!" groaned Harold. "What can mother be thinking of?"

"How do you feel?" inquired the little man. "Are you stiff? Will your joints work? My, but you have slept! The scientific world has made you a study for generations."

"Much obliged, I'm sure," replied Harold in default of a more brilliant reply. It was somewhat amusing to a man who knew himself to be just twenty-three years of age to be told that he had been an object of curiosity for generations.

"What has the scientific world thought to do about you?" it suddenly occurred to him to inquire.

"They say this is man's century," replied the little fellow, "but I don't know that I understand the meaning of that. There are many men who are dissatisfied with things in general, but I don't know why they should be, I'm sure. I'm comfortable enough, and I don't believe a change would make things any better."



How much more attractive he would be in skirts.

This was all Greek to Harold, and when he was in college he declined to study Greek.

"I wonder if you are really a man?" he asked. "You are pretty enough for a doll."

"Do you think me pretty?" The little man blushed beautifully. "Wife says I am," he added. "She is awfully jealous, don't you know. But you are a man, too. She doesn't like to have another woman look at me, but she ought not to mind because a man thinks me pretty, ought she?"

Harold was disgusted. He wanted to take the little fellow between his thumb and finger and crush him, but restrained himself with the thought that the man was a lunatic.

"You—get—my—clothes," he said, with great sternness. He hoped to frighten his guest into obedience. "Get them this minute or I'll"—

"But, sir," faltered the little man, "your clothes were moth eaten years ago."

"Oh, heavens! See here, you chattering monkey, if you don't do as I tell you I'll drop you out of the window."

Harold arose as if to execute his threat, and the little man fled, screaming, into the hall. Harold wrapped his tattered bedding about him and followed, determined to find something to wear. He was just in time to see Mrs. Winthrop caressing her little husband and to hear her telling him not to be afraid, for nothing should hurt him as long as she lived to protect him.

"Go back to your room," she said sternly when she saw Harold. It is exactly what he would have been most anxious to do under ordinary circumstances, but now he felt that he was in a place where desperate measures must

be employed. He was convinced that his garments had been taken from his own room by some one whose intentions were not of the friendliest, and he determined to go down stairs and find some member of his family, even though he must appear in tattered nightgown and bedding much the worse from wear. So when Mrs. Winthrop ordered him back to his room he simply told her to go to thunder, nor did he feel at all ashamed for speaking so rudely to a lady, as he would have done had she seemed to him less like a man and more like a woman.

Mrs. Winthrop gently pushed her husband toward a door leading to another room.

"Go in there, dear," she said, "and do not be afraid. I'll get him back to bed in a moment."

"I don't want to strike a lady," Harold remarked, with great earnestness, "but if you touch me you'll be sorry."

Mrs. Winthrop showed no nervousness.

"Will you walk back to your room," she asked, "or must I carry you?"

Harold made no reply. He thought it scarcely worth while. He started to pass her that he might go down stairs, when he suddenly felt her arms around his waist. He endeavored to free himself, but could not.

"If you don't release me, I'll knock you down!" he thundered. The little man screamed in terror and begged his wife to let him go for help, but she commanded him to keep quiet. Mrs. Winthrop was perfectly self-possessed. Harold felt that he was being lifted from his feet. He fought desperately, but when one has slept for a hundred years one's strength becomes exhausted. Harold was no match for the powerful woman, and almost before he knew it he was held firmly on his bed by Mrs.

Winthrop, who called to her husband to bring fresh bedding to be used in place of that which he had destroyed.

"Now, sir," she said when Harold no longer offered resistance, "I want to have no more trouble with you. You have lain here a hundred years, and it won't hurt you to keep quiet a day or two longer. You must stay until the tailor comes to make your suit."

She turned to leave the room again, and Harold called after her to remain.

"Stop!" he implored. "Where is my father?"

"No one knows, sir. He died about five years after he had put you into that hypnotic sleep, so I am told. He had expected to awaken you in a few hours, and when he failed to do it his heart broke. It is quite a wonderful historical fact, sir. Should you like to see a school history?"

"No, I think not," replied Harold faintly. A sudden remembrance had illumined his mind. He recalled the housewarming and his opposition to being made to sleep past the hour when he wished to walk home with Letty Mays. He looked at his hands. They had been brown from boating when he went to sleep. He had spent many hours in trying to get them as deeply sunburned as those of the leaders in the athletic club to which he belonged. Now they were as white and soft as a baby's. He knew that they could not have been bleached in one night. He looked around his room. It had been painfully new when he went to sleep; now much of the woodwork was moth eaten. Instead of a smell of varnish there was a smell of decay. The more he thought of it the more convinced he became that the woman and her husband had spoken the truth, and that he had slept many years. He tried

to realize his position. It was far from being desirable, as may be imagined. None of his near relatives was living. There was not one soul whom he knew to congratulate him on having awakened. He neither felt nor looked a day older than when he had gone to sleep, and he told himself that he could not hope to die for many years. Yet life looked to him to be hardly worth living. He had always dreaded change. He disliked making new acquaintances, but now he faced the necessity of becoming acquainted with persons of whom he had never so much as heard and of trying to accustom himself to a world one hundred and twenty-three years older than that into which he had been born.

His reverie was disturbed by the entrance of the tailor, who was no larger than the man who had fainted.

"Truly," said the tailor, surveying Harold with astonishment, "truly there were giants in those days! Were there many men as large as you?"

"I was not considered very large," replied Harold. "My father was taller and heavier." It was hard for Harold to use the past tense, but he now thought it to be a necessity, and he did not believe in fighting the inevitable.

"My, my," exclaimed the tailor, "how very large you are! I have been obliged to get my own living ever since my wife died. I was a tailor before she married me and have been a tailor ever since her death, but I never before took measurements like these. I'm not sure, sir, that I can find a piece of cloth large enough for a whole suit."

"Then make it of five or six pieces," replied Harold impatiently. "Bring me anything that will hide my nakedness. I am tired of lying here."

"I should think you would be," replied the tailor feelingly.

"Can you tell me anything about a girl of the name of Letty Mays?" asked Harold as the tailor was about to leave.

"Letty Mays!" repeated the tailor. "I never heard the name. It is not in the histories—oh, yes, it is, too! She was the girl to whom you were betrothed. She was a rattle brained—"

"Look out!" thundered Harold, raising himself in bed. He looked fierce enough to frighten a man of his own size, and the tailor rushed from the room, his face white with fear.

Mrs. Winthrop came in at that moment to bring a history for Harold, and for fully two minutes they looked at each other without flinching.

"You are very strong for a man," said she at last.

"You are as strong as a man," replied Harold.

"Strong as a man!" Mrs. Winthrop smiled contemptuously. "We will not pursue that subject," she said. "I simply want to say that unless you show yourself a little more tractable I shall be obliged to have you examined for insanity."

With that remark she left the room, and Harold spent the time in which his suit was being made in reading of the events of his day as recorded in the history and in alternately laughing and swearing at the untruthfulness of the pictures presented. He finished the book, convinced that he had really slept a hundred years.

CHAPTER III.

When Harold's suit at last arrived, his first thought as he surveyed himself before the glass was that now he could go down into the dining room and have a good square meal. What that thought was to him can only be imagined by the hungry man to whom the delights of the table are supreme. Since Harold's awakening he had been served with what he called broth, accompanied with nuts and fruit of different varieties. He supposed it was served according to the orders of a physician, who might imagine that it was necessary for his stomach to get used to work by degrees after so long a period of idleness. If that were so, the broth and fruit might seem reasonable enough as a diet, but how about the nuts?

"Mrs. Winthrop," he said, going down to the porch, where that lady was taking her morning exercise, "what is your dinner hour? And is the room that my mother selected still used for the dining room?"

"Dining room! What can you mean?" For a moment Mrs. Winthrop looked puzzled; then her brow suddenly cleared as she exclaimed: "Oh, I remember now! I was reading only the other day that people used to sit around large tables and watch one another eat all manner of queer stuff that they called food. They must have resembled pigs gathered around a trough."

"May I ask," said Harold, striving to control his wrath, "how you manage the matter of eating at the present time?"

"To be sure. You have been nourished since your awakening, have you not?"

"I have been given a little broth."

"Have you not felt sufficiently nourished?"

"I have not suffered with hunger," admitted Harold, who suddenly realized that he had not felt hunger at all, but was simply uneasy because he had not sat at a table and filled himself with food as he had done in the good old days which were to him but as yesterday. He began to have an awful fear that he had slept beyond the pleasures of eating at a loaded table in company with congenial friends. Mrs. Winthrop's next words confirmed this fear.

"In this day," she said, "no one thinks of supplying his system with necessary fuel in public. Each takes such nourishment as his system requires whenever it is most needed, but he would no more think of allowing his neighbor to see him take it than he would think of changing his linen in public."

"I fear I have much to learn," said Harold, "before I shall be able to live in this da—ahem, beautiful world."

"I am afraid you have, sir," replied Mrs. Winthrop severely. "There is an old woman living not far from here who might help you. It is said that she is nearly a hundred years of age, and that she has a fine memory. She might be able to teach you the difference between your yesterday and our to-day and so save you and us a great deal of embarrassment."

Harold thought the idea a good one and decided to go to this old woman at once. It was barely possible that she had not given up the good old customs for the outrageous new ones, and that she might ask him to stay to dinner. In an incredibly short space of time he had placed himself before her.

"So you are the sleeper?" she exclaimed. "My, my,

how young you look! It would be hard for any one to believe that you are thirty years older than I am."

Harold looked at the thin figure, the wrinkled face and the toothless mouth, then recalled the handsome young fellow he had seen in the glass only that morning and decided that it would be hard indeed.

"Well," she said when he had made known his errand, "what do you most want to know?"

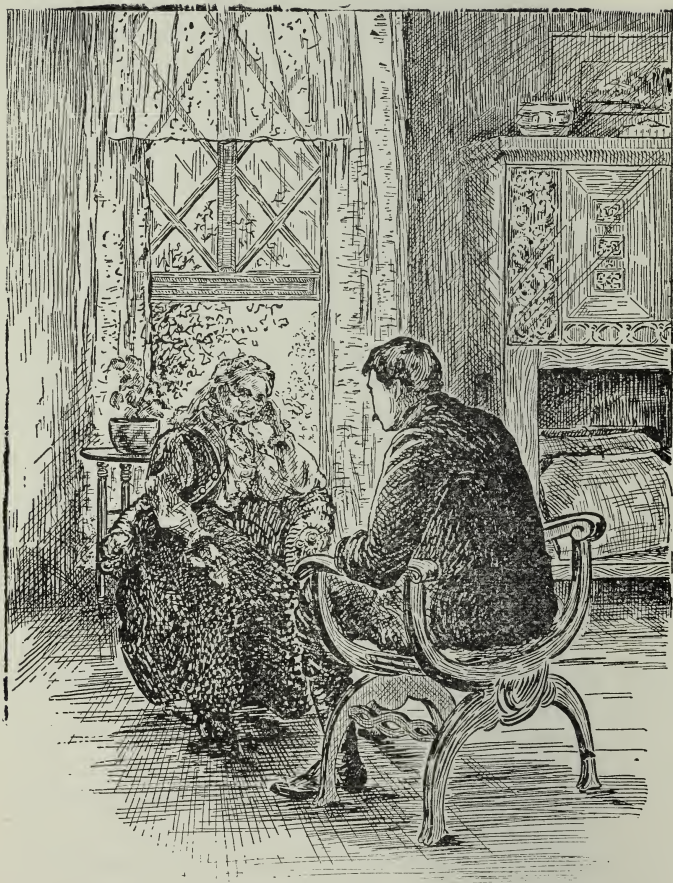
"How do people manage to eat?" he asked. "I'm getting deucedly hungry. Don't you know of a nice place where a fellow can get roast beef, and mince pie, and cranberry jelly, and a good cup of coffee, and a few such trifles?" Harold's mouth watered as he asked the question. He felt he had a great deal to do to make up for all the good things of life which he had lost while sleeping.

"My dear sir," exclaimed the old lady, placing a restraining hand on his arm, "I beg you will not mention such things again. It makes me quite faint. Remember I am not so young as I once was."

"Are you hungry?" asked Harold kindly. He could think of no other reason why any one should become faint from hearing such things as roast beef and mince pie talked about. "Is there a restaurant near?"

"A restaurant!" The old lady burst into a peal of laughter. "Oh," she gasped, "you take me back to the days of my childhood! Oh, it is so funny! Mary, Mary, come here a moment!"

A young woman entered the room and stood beside the old lady's chair. She was fully six feet tall and must have weighed two hundred pounds, yet she was not fleshy. Harold thought she must be a female prize fighter and



It is hard to believe that you are thirty years older than I am.

wondered if the old lady had sent for her for protection.

"What is it, grandma?" she asked pleasantly.

"This young man wishes to be directed to a restaurant. Now, are you willing to believe that such things existed in my day?"

"Oh, sir," said Mary, turning to Harold, "did you ever eat before any one?"

"I did," replied Harold, "and I should like to do it again. I hoped I might at least get a cup of coffee here."

"I used to eat such things seventy or eighty years ago," said the old lady, "but I shudder now to think of it. You will, too, when you become used to the new way."

"I shudder now to think of life without eating," replied Harold, with a feeble smile. "I think," he added, "that I shall not be successful in an attempt to live on air and water."

"You must go to a physician as soon as possible," said the old lady. "He will make an examination and tell you what chemical elements are necessary to keep your system in good working order. He will also tell you how much of each should be taken and how often. On every corner you will see shops where these foods are for sale. Every one prepares them for one's self, and no one thinks of taking his neighbor into his confidence as to his system's demands. Oh, Mary, think how folks would laugh to hear me make these explanations!"

The old lady burst into another peal of laughter, which Harold found extremely irritating. He did not smile. Neither did Mary, and for a moment he felt grateful to her, but only for a moment.

"I think such innocence is charming," he heard Mary

say in an undertone to the old lady. "Such a beautiful boy should not be allowed to take care of himself. It isn't safe. I propose to take care of him. It isn't conventional, I know, but hang conventionalities!"

"She uses slang like a man," thought Harold. "What next, I wonder?"

Harold began to be somewhat alarmed. Did this amazon propose to send him to a lunatic asylum? He wondered if he could outrun her should she pursue him. Before he had decided as to what he had better do Mary came to his side and took his hand in hers.

"My dear," she said tenderly, "I know that what I am about to say may seem a little premature, but I am animated by thoughts of your welfare as well as my own gratification. Love is not measured by hours, but by heart throbs. Should I know you a hundred years I could not love you more sincerely. Will you be mine? I promise to care for you most tenderly."

"You promise to—good Lord, deliver us! What is the woman talking about?"

"I know this must seem sudden to you. You have not yet learned to know your heart, but you are so young and inexperienced—at least so inexperienced. Don't you think it would be better for you to trust your happiness in my keeping? Don't mind grandma. Indeed her presence should assure you as to the purity of my motives."

"It's a proposal!" thought Harold. "As sure as I live it is a proposal."

He could with difficulty restrain his laughter, but he remembered that she was a woman, and although ridiculously eccentric not to be laughed at. He wished

he might think of some easy way of putting her off, believing that one so weakminded would not long remember having mentioned such a subject.

"Madam," he said, "suppose you try to forget"—

"Does that mean you cannot accept my love?" asked Mary, who was quite infatuated with him.

"I am afraid it does," replied Harold, struggling with his mirth. In all his life he had never had so funny an experience.

"And you can laugh!" exclaimed Mary reproachfully. "You are heartless, absolutely heartless." She turned and left the room without another word, and Harold indulged in unrestrained laughter until suddenly made aware that the old lady was regarding him with great seriousness.

"It would have been better," she said, "if you had been a little more manly. You might at least have offered to be a brother to her. You have hurt a very warm heart and lost a good chance to marry. Mary could have relieved you of many vexations."

The old lady's seriousness irritated Harold. The idea of any one taking such a proposal seriously was too preposterous to be entertained for a moment. He concluded that his call had been quite long enough, and that he should take his departure as soon as he had made sure that she could tell him nothing more about dining.

"Did I understand you to say," he asked, "that no one eats anything but broth and—ah, air?"

"I said nothing about eating air. There are nuts and fruits. They are produced in great quantities, and growers vie with each other in starting new varieties. And, by the way, I must warn you not to present a basket of

fruit to any one. I mention it, remembering that in your day it was done as a mark of friendship and even of love. How dreadfully coarse it was! In this day it would be considered as insulting as the presentation of a beef roast would have been a hundred years ago."

"May I ask," said Harold, smiling at the thought, "what young men do offer the ladies of their affections?"

"What do young men—oh, now I see why you laughed at Mary! No. In these days, my dear sir, young men offer nothing. It would be considered a mark of immodesty. They do not seek ladies in marriage. It would be highly improper for them to show any affection until the lady has offered them some encouragement."

"Am I to understand that women now do the love-making?"

"Why, to be sure!"

"And the men wait to be courted?"

"How else could there be marriages?"

Harold stared at the old lady for fully five minutes before replying. Such a state of affairs was quite beyond his comprehension. It was too serious to be laughable.

"It used to be different, I know," added the old lady, "but it was no more satisfactory."

"Wasn't it, though!" exclaimed Harold. "Permit me to say that I do not agree with you. But let us not quarrel on that subject. At present I am more interested in the food question than in the fact that women have a corner on the business of lovemaking. Can you tell me why the change was made in regard to the habit of dining?"

"Because women could not use their precious time in cooking, setting tables, washing dishes, hemming table

linen and doing the thousand and one other tasks which the old habit of dining made necessary."

"But how do women employ themselves?"

"Keep your eyes open for one week, my dear sir, and you will not need to ask. Although the character of the work has changed, there is still plenty to do, and, as you can see, men amount to little in these days. That is my opinion at least, and I think it will be yours, but women do not seem to agree with me. They consider me very odd for not attaching myself to one of these little specimens of humanity. Ah, they did not live in the days when there were men like you!"

"Why are all the men so small?" asked Harold hastily. He feared another proposal.

"It is a natural result of generations of dissipation. I have been told that in 1892 there were many miniature specimens of masculinity to be seen on the streets, but the people did not seem to realize or even to recognize the danger which they heralded. There was an occasional prophet who spoke of the dangers of cigarette smoking, for instance, but, notwithstanding, two-thirds of the boys smoked cigarettes and wondered why they did not grow to be as large as their fathers. Were you as large as your father?"

Harold admitted that he had not been, and that it had been a source of regret to him.

"Had you not gone to sleep," continued the old lady, "I presume you would not have been so good or so much of a man in any way as your father. Men indulged in all sorts of dissipations, which had their effect both mentally and morally. As they became less manly women became more so. Women took up all sorts of self culture

and became man's superior in every way long before even they or the men recognized the fact. When the awakening came, there was a revolution. I think in your day there was considerable dissatisfaction among women, but I am not sure. Of late years I have been a little doubtful as to the dates."

"I think you are right," replied Harold, who was very much interested in the old lady's talk. "We had the woman suffragists and an organization called the W. C. T. U. and several smaller organizations which were for the purpose of training men to know right from wrong."

"How did men regard them?"

"They laughed at first, I believe. Later they became more indulgent."

"But they never read the sign by the wayside even then. Well, these societies increased. Women became more and more self supporting and in every way independent. Men were gradually forced to the wall in the labor market. In 1925 no man dared to ask a woman to marry him unless he knew that she could help support the family, and no girl would have thought of marrying without having first learned a trade, for they placed no faith in man's ability to care for women. Indeed there were few marriages, for women did not respect men, and men felt under no obligations to stay with a wife when they thought they could live easier away from her. Women refused to be governed by those whom they considered inferior to themselves, and finally there came the war of the revolution between the sexes. Men should have seen from the first what must have been the result of the war. They had become weakened by generations of self indulgence. Women had grown more powerful, and theirs

was not a difficult victory. After the war men found themselves obliged to sue for woman's favor as women had once sued for theirs. Women had little respect for them, and for a long time man's position was not much superior to that of slavery. They rapidly lost what little power of independent thought they had kept through their years of dissipation and soon became what you see them now--worse, in fact, for of late years there seems to be an uneasiness among a few of them, corresponding to the uneasiness shown by a few women in your day."

"Did you know Letty Mays?" asked Harold, who was reminded of his old love by the mention of the women of his day.

"Oh, yes. She was a middle aged woman when I was a little girl. I went with her several times to see you as you slept, and she told me a great deal about you. She did not marry until quite late in life. She left one son. His name was Harold Winthrop Everett. He married a young woman when he was past 60 years of age and left a daughter, whom he named Letty Mays, after her grandmother. Letty lives alone in the house where you used to court her grandmother. She is twenty-six years old now and is considered rather peculiar, I believe. For my part, I like her."

"In what way does she show her peculiarity?" asked Harold.

"Oh, she doesn't like men very well. She never takes a man anywhere. She declares that she will not marry until she finds a man as smart as herself, and she talks so much about equality between the sexes that she is making many men quite uneasy. She has quite a following among the men whose wives do not treat them well. Once

she said that she was waiting for Harold Winthrop to awaken that she might propose to him. Of course, sir, you will understand that she was joking, not believing that you would ever awaken."

"I understand," replied Harold, "but let me tell you this: When I marry, it will not be to a woman who makes love to me. I reserve the little pleasure of popping the question as my exclusive right."

"Oh, nonsense!" replied the old lady playfully. "I've heard young men talk before. When the right girl asks you to marry her, you'll assent without a word of protest."

Somewhat tired with his long conversation with the old lady, Harold decided to rest himself by calling on Miss Letty Mays Everett. He hoped that he might find a little pleasure such as he used to enjoy, in getting up a mild flirtation with the granddaughter of his old love.

CHAPTER IV.

Miss Letty Mays Everett had read many charming romances of that period of the world's existence when man was physically if not mentally and morally woman's superior. They had made a strong impression on her mind. She told herself that it would be quite possible to propose to such a man as that—some one who could fight for her, work for her or die for her if necessary. She could not quite understand how any man could be so venturesome as to make the proposal himself, as in the romances he was represented as doing, unless he were

quite devoid of the finer sensibilities. So she constructed her ideal hero on a plan quite as impossible as such personages are usually constructed. He was nineteenth century in all that had appealed to her imagination and twentieth century in everything else.

The romances that Letty enjoyed so much were considered quite too improbable by the scholars of her day to be classed with the healthful literature. They were piled side by side in the public libraries with rusty mythologies and with histories of the earlier centuries, where the dust settled thickly upon them. They were owned by a very few, who were not even so much as envied their possession. Many of the volumes which Letty had read had been handed down since the days of her grandmother's father.

Letty's friends strongly disapproved of her reading such stuff. They said she might have been quite a sensible woman had it not been for her books. They also disapproved of her frequent visits to the old woman, the "Liveforever," as she was called. They knew that Letty went to her simply to hear the stories she had to tell of the days before the revolution of the sexes. No one else believed so implicitly in the stories of men as the old woman told them, and every one thought Letty might better spend her time in trying to solve the problems of the day as they were presented before her.

Something—it might have been the reading; it might have been an inheritance from an oversentimental grandmother, whose heart had been divided between her husband and her sleeping lover—something had made Letty very different from the women of her day. She wanted a husband who would be a companion, not a pretty little

fellow whom she could caress and indulge and dress prettily and boast of when at her club with other women. It seemed to her that it ought not to be unreasonable to expect a man to be as intelligent as herself.

Her friends were alarmed when they heard her make such statements. They said that if her ideas obtained society would be overturned and the home life destroyed; that men would become unsexed; that women would be crowded out of the labor market and could no longer support themselves and their families; that, in fact, they could not take time to have families, for wages would be so low that they would be obliged to work throughout the year. Some of the objectors went so far as to teach that if men were allowed equal suffrage there would be a revival of the whisky trade which flourished in the nineteenth century, and that families could no longer be regulated as to number by a woman's ability to provide for her children. The well read offered as proof of their arguments the historical fact that many charitable institutions had been organized during the days of man's supremacy to care for the children who came into the world when there were no means for their support, and that every county had a place of detention called a jail, where they were cared for who should never have been born, but who had grown to manhood as best they could in a world where they were worse than parasites. There were few intelligent women in the twentieth century who could be made to believe that men were capable of exercising the moral self control suggested by Malthus as a needful check to meet the growing danger of overpopulation, and for that reason more than for any other the doctrine of man's suffrage made little headway. It might have died had it not been for Miss

Letty's curious desire to find a husband who should also be a companion, and for her belief, formed from much thought on the subject, that only in perfect equality could be found the relation which the Omnipotent meant should exist between the sexes.

"Such talk is wild," said her friends. "There can be no such thing as perfect equality between the sexes. The world is used to the existing order of things; we are comfortable; men are happy or ought to be, for we do everything to make them so—let well enough alone."

But still Letty clung to her ideals, and every year the number of men made dissatisfied by her glowing representations of a future in which they should stand side by side with women was slowly but steadily increasing.

It was not difficult for Harold to find the house where Letty lived. How often he had been there in the good old days when Letty's grandmother was to him the most attractive girl in the world! The house was small compared with the more modern structures which towered beside it; yet it, like the Winthrop residence, had been considered fine in his day. Now they were looked upon as unsightly nuisances which should have been torn down long ago and would have been had it not been for an untiring sleeper and a sentimental young woman.

When Harold paused at the gate, he saw a woman sitting on the porch in the very place where his old love had so often waited for him. She glanced up and their eyes met. They were Letty May's eyes—deep blue, steadfast, tender, beautiful. The mouth and chin were Letty's, too; but Letty had been small and sylphlike, while this lady was tall and magnificently proportioned, like most of the women he had seen since awakening.

Letty's face had been as dimpled and full of wonder as a baby's; it had indicated a spirit of loving dependence which Harold had thought charming. This woman's face was strong and resolute. She looked like one accustomed to being obeyed, not because she was a woman, but because her commands were reasonable. Harold had never liked such women. A feeling of antagonism arose in his heart, which would have driven him past her door had she been any one else, but she was the granddaughter of his old love, and sentiment and loneliness urged him to make her acquaintance. As he opened the gate Miss Everett came forward to meet him.

"Pardon me," she said, with a smile, "but am I not speaking to Harold Winthrop?"

"That is my name," replied Harold, "and you are Miss Everett, I think."

"I am Miss Everett, at your service. We know each other, so why should we not dispense with ceremony and consider ourselves old acquaintances?"

In her heart Miss Letty was thinking that this young man had in reality very little regard for ceremony to seek her thus without having been encouraged, but she was too much of a lady to wish to subject him to any humiliation and so chose to speak as if she were the transgressor, not he.

Had her words been spoken with the frankness of unrestrained girlhood or the shyness of maidenly modesty Harold would have been charmed, but it was said exactly in the same way in which he had meant to speak to her, and he was disgusted. And the words were accompanied with an expression which, Harold thought, would have made the professional heart smasher among men quite

green with envy. In his day Harold had prided himself on being something of a lady killer himself, but a man killer was different! Harold remembered the scene with Mary and wished he had not come. To his mind there was nothing more disagreeable than being made love to by a woman.

Letty had extended her hand to assist Harold up the steps, as she would have done had he been any other man, but when he, as she thought, quite rudely ignored her proffered assistance her assurance left her to a certain extent, and she was in doubt as to the next best thing to do. She was extremely anxious to propitiate the handsome guest, who evidently felt himself aggrieved about something. Letty would have given considerable to know how she had offended, for her heart was stirred for the first time. She felt that at last she had seen a man who was worth the price of her freedom.

"Why," she thought, "he is quite as tall as myself, and he looks as if he might be as strong. If he is as nearly equal in other respects, how companionable he might be!"

Letty would have been surprised could she have known that his opinion of her was far less flattering. She was used to being made much of by the opposite sex and could count by scores the men who, she was sure, would have been glad to accept the protection which she could give to one whom she loved.

"I have no good excuse to offer for this intrusion," began Harold.

"I beg, sir," interrupted the lady, "that you will not mention it. I assure you that I feel most honored by your presence in my house."

A period of silent awkwardness followed, during which

each was waiting for the other to be seated, for in that day it was considered a mark of impoliteness for the lady to seat herself while a gentleman remained standing. Harold finally recalled a portion of his conversation with the old woman, who had used this fact to prove that the existing state of affairs had begun in his day and had clinched her argument by reminding him that without doubt he had known many men who declined to give up their seat in a railway or street car when ladies were standing. Harold settled matters by dropping into the proffered chair. He had kept his hat on, remembering that the old lady had said that twentieth century men always wore their hats in the presence of ladies. He recalled the objections made by many men in his day to removing their hats when riding in an elevator with a lady, and he wondered if that, too, could have been considered a sign of approaching effeminacy of men and if it would have made any difference could they have seen into the future a hundred years.

"Now," he thought, "I am ready to make a call, twentieth century fashion!" Harold had always prided himself on his ability to adjust himself to circumstances. He made some inconsequential remark about the weather, asked about the latest opera and looked so self satisfied that Letty was quite disgusted.

"I wonder if all men in his day were so assured of their own winsomeness," she thought.

To have pleased her he should have been charming without appearing to know that he was so. Instead of trying to entertain her he should have waited to be entertained. Or if he were bent upon being entertaining he should have shown his ability to talk about something of

interest instead of wearying her with weak remarks about the weather and the latest opera. The ideal of the perfect man which Letty had in mind was not worked out as to details, and it was not easy for her to say in which of the more common characteristics she would have him different from the men of her acquaintance. Of one thing she was sure, however, and that was that Harold should have blushed or in some other charming manner have shown his appreciation of the fact that he had overstepped the bounds of conventionality, and that she was better than most women would be not to take advantage of the fact and be a little insulting. Letty believed that a pretty man had no business to have unattractive manners. What else were men good for but to make themselves attractive to women? She concluded that if all the men of his day were like Harold Winthrop she did not wonder that the war of the revolution between the sexes had taken place. She decided to punish him for his brazen effrontery by treating him with no more respect than she would have accorded another woman, and thus it happened that she and Harold were enabled to get on quite comfortably together. Their talk was mostly of the differences which Harold noted in the city during the last hundred years, and he made himself very entertaining by describing the streets as he remembered them. It was not until he arose to leave that the difference in customs was touched upon. Then he precipitated the discussion by asking if he might not call again very soon.

Letty looked embarrassed. It was not easy for her to tell this handsome young man that he was in danger of getting himself talked about most unpleasantly, but she had almost resolved to ask him to be her husband should

she succeed in making him a little more conventional, and she did not like the thought that he might become an object of unpleasant comment among other women. It seemed to her that under the circumstances there was but one course for her to pursue.

"My dear young man," she said, with tender gravity, "don't you know that it will not do for you to call on women in this way? You would be criticised most unkindly. Tell me instead when you will be at home that I may call upon you—that is, if you will grant me that pleasure."

"Grant you the infernal—I beg your pardon, madam! I am not a profane man by nature, but such nonsense would wring an oath from the lips of the Angel Gabriel."

"Such nonsense!" repeated Letty. "Surely, my dear young man, you must have misunderstood"—

"Did you not propose to call on me at my house?" interrupted Harold, who in his disgust had quite forgotten that he was not living in the century in which he was born.

"I did. Is it so distasteful to you"—

"Distasteful? Why, hang it all, don't you see that I could not permit you to do a thing like that?"

"I must admit," replied Letty stiffly, "that I do not see. I should be pleased to hear your explanation."

"Why, there'd be no end of talk among the gossips, and if the fellows should get hold of it I'd be chaffed clean out of my wits. My dear child, believe me, you mustn't think of doing such a thing,"

CHAPTER V.

In all her life Letty had not heard such language as this from the lips of a young man. She was inexpressibly shocked, yet withal she was interested. It was quite delightful, she told herself, to meet one so very unconventional, but she did not care to be seen in his company by other men whose good opinion she might one day wish to win. Although she had longed all her life to meet a man different from the men of her acquaintance, now that she stood face to face with him she wished him to be properly conventional.

Harold had not finished speaking when he suddenly realized that this was the twentieth century, and that the world had changed while he slept.

"Do you mean to say," he demanded, with a sudden change of tone that was almost ludicrous, "that it is the custom in this enlightened community for ladies to call upon gentlemen?"

"I most certainly do," replied Letty.

"Well," returned Harold after a little period of silence, "I think if we are to be friends"—

"As we should for grandma's sake," eagerly interposed Letty, who was so anxious to continue the acquaintance that she did not think how her remark might be taken until it had escaped her lips.

"Oh, my dear fellow," she added quickly, "I beg your pardon, I'm sure!"

Letty was consumed with mortification. She had always been careful not to remind any man that he was growing older every year and consequently less attractive, and it was exasperating that she should now have been so

thoughtless as to remind this beautiful young fellow that he had been the recipient of her grandmother's loverlike attentions. As will be seen, Letty did not quite understand the courtships of the nineteenth century—perhaps because a number of the books which her grandmother had left her had been written by Howells.

Harold was far from being pleased. It is never pleasant to be reminded, more especially by a handsome young woman, that one belongs to a past century. Letty could not but perceive that he was hurt.

"What can I say?" she asked, distressed beyond measure at his silence. As she spoke she went to his side and tenderly took his hand in hers. Her touch thrilled him, while it angered him, and he pulled his hand away, quite as a grieved young girl might have done in his day. The action reminded Letty of previous flirtations, and she began to feel more at home with him. She quickly decided that, after all, young men were all very much alike, and that there was none of them who could not be won by the lucky young woman who knew how to work upon their susceptibilities. She was congratulating herself on the pleasure she would have in a flirtation with this coquettish young fellow when her dream was rudely shattered by the look of determination on Harold's face as he arose and stood before her.

"Miss Everett," he said frankly, "I should like to become better acquainted with you, but I cannot sacrifice all my ideas of the fitness of things to the absurd customs of this generation."

"Are our customs more absurd than yours were?" asked Letty.

"They seem so to me."

"May that not be because you are not used to them?"

"Perhaps so. However, I do not mean to conform to them in any way that seems to me to reflect on my manhood."

"But they are established"—

"I cannot help that. I assure you I would if I could. As I said just now, I should like to know you better. Can we not strike a compromise that shall enable us to become friends?"

"We might try. I should feel flattered, I'm sure."

"Suppose, then, we agree to meet in the park and dispense with calling and a few other of the restrictions of society conventionalities? I will try to forget the customs of the nineteenth century if you'll ignore those of the twentieth, and we will be as free as the birds."

Letty agreed, thinking that if this peculiar young man could afford to run such a risk she certainly could. She comforted her uneasy conscience with the thought that no eligible young woman was severely condemned for sowing a few wild oats unless the results were too rank to be overlooked by a most indulgent public.

Harold was about to bow himself from Letty's presence when he caught sight of a woman striding down the street.

"Why," he exclaimed, with a merry laugh, "I believe that is my friend Mary. She is an odd specimen of humanity, isn't she?"

"May I ask what you know about her?" inquired Letty.

"Only that she proposed to me on sight"—

The sentence was never finished. There was a sudden loud report, which seemed to break the world into bits, and a stunning blow which pounded it together again.

For a moment Harold felt himself to be the embodiment of confusion in a world of darkness lighted only by stars which danced madly before his eyes. There was a sound of excited voices, which seemed to come from the stars. Then came an interval of blessed quiet, when he was conscious of neither light nor darkness—when there was no world and nothing in it.

Harold was unconscious but a moment. When he recovered, he found himself lying at full length on the porch, with Letty bending over him.

“Are you better?” she asked tenderly.

“What is the matter? Have I been shot?”

“You came near being. I saw your danger just in time to knock you down. The bullet passed above you as you fell.”

“You knocked me down!”

“I did. I could have saved you in no other way.”

“I think,” replied Harold, with a smile, “that I might as well have been shot.”

As he spoke he started to raise himself from his recumbent position, but in a moment Letty had lifted him to his feet and placed him in a chair.

“Why did you do that?” he asked angrily. “I have not yet become so helpless that I must be lifted by a woman.”

Before Letty could explain that she had only done what custom demanded of a woman Harold’s attention was drawn to Mary, who was struggling to free herself from the hold of several stalwart women, who were endeavoring to secure her by means of cords.

“I have had her arrested,” said Letty, following his glance.

"What are you going to do with her?" asked Harold of the women.

"We are waiting for the ambulance," they replied. "She will soon be placed where she can make no more disturbance."

"It was she who fired at you," explained Letty. "Poor Mary! She has a good heart, but a violent temper."

"Let Mary go free," interrupted Harold. "You need not arrest her on my account. I can take care of myself."

"Ah, my dear sir," they replied, "you do not know the world as we do."

"And I don't want to," retorted Harold. "Release Mary, I say, or you'll be sorry!"

"We might as well do as he requests," said Letty to the women, much as if he had been a persistent child, too attractive to be denied that which he desired.

Mary was released, and Harold turned abruptly away, wishing that he had never awakened. He hated to live in a world ruled by women, and he wondered if there were any new inventions in the methods of committing suicide which were superior to those of his day. He had not walked far when he was overtaken by Mary.

"Why did you make them release me?" she asked abruptly.

"Because I did not want you arrested on my account."

"But I tried to kill you."

"I wish you had succeeded."

"Are you so very unhappy?"

"I am hungry and homesick and utterly disgusted."

"Have you been to a physician?"

"No."

"A good one lives here. Hadn't you better go in?"

"It is all nonsense. I want food, not medicine."

"You will find that it is food. Don't pass the door. You must go in sooner or later, you know. You will feel better when your system has been replenished."

"I presume you are right. Well, I'll go."

Harold turned to go up the steps of a fine house bearing the sign: "E. A. Coburn, M. D. Food prescriptions a specialty."

"Over the way," said Mary, interrupting him, "in that store with the sign 'System Supplies' across the front, you will be able to purchase what you want. It is the best place in the city. They do not adulterate their compounds."

"Thanks," said Harold. "You are the first one who has given me any practical information."

"I hope," faltered Mary, "that you will not think me unwomanly for mentioning these things."

"Unwomanly! Why should I think that?"

"Most men object to having women speak of such things. They prefer to have us think that they are too angelic to require system supplies."

"They must be like some women I used to know," replied Harold, with a laugh. "Well, good night, Mary."

Harold ran lightly up the stone steps, but before he had touched the bell he was again detained by Mary. "Harold," she said softly, "did you interfere in my behalf because you have decided to love me a little?"

"Don't be so silly!" exclaimed Harold in disgust. "I was just beginning to think you quite a jolly girl. Why must you spoil it all?"

"I understand," replied Mary bitterly. "You have given your heart to Letty, but she will never care for you

half as tenderly as I could. There is no tenderness in her nature."

Harold had touched the bell, and Mary had not finished speaking when the door opened, and Harold was invited to walk into the doctor's office. On entering he was disgusted to find that E. A. Coburn was a lady.

"I beg pardon," he said, "but I think there must be some mistake. I expected to find a man doctor."

"There are no men practicing medicine in this city," replied E. A. Coburn. "Indeed I do not know of but one man doctor in the world, and he is a quack. He could not be otherwise, you know, for he was allowed to attend no medical college of any note."

"Do you mean to say that women prescribe for men?"

"Why not? When a man is sick, he wants the best medical assistance to be obtained. Men are not either mentally or physically strong enough to become doctors. Neither have they the requisite patience. Worse yet, their love of money would lead them to ply their profession with other than humanitarian motives."

"Notwithstanding," replied Harold, "a feeling of delicacy leads me to prefer a man. However, if there is no man to be had, I suppose I must yield to the inevitable as gracefully as may be."

Dr. Coburn not only prescribed for Harold, but administered some of the food which she thought his system demanded most urgently, and when he left the office he felt that life was much better worth living. He had at last found one change in the twentieth century which met with his hearty approval—Dr. Coburn refused to take the fee he offered, saying that it would be considered a bribe,

and that the salary paid by government was quite remunerative enough to meet her needs.

When Harold reached his own door, he chanced to glance back just in time to see two figures, one on either side of the street, disappearing into the shadows. He at once surmised that he had been followed by Mary, who in turn had been followed by Letty.

CHAPTER VI.

Several weeks had passed since Harold's proposition to meet Letty in the park had been made and accepted, and the two had become more and more deeply interested in each other. In fact, the time had come when each felt that matters might as well be settled between them at once, and one fine morning each started for the park with the firm determination to make a proposal of marriage that very fine day. Both were strangely excited, for neither felt sure of the sentiments of the other. They had succeeded very well in ignoring customs and conventionalities, and their relationship during these weeks had been much like that which might exist between two men or two women who understood each other, and who were thrown together in a strange land where no one understood them.

It was like that, with one little exception—the difference in the influence which love exerts on two whom nature intended for companions. Indeed conventionalities had been so entirely forgotten that neither Harold nor Letty thought that the other might claim the right

of proposal, but each acted according to the promptings of the heart. It was not until they attempted to put their thoughts into words that conventional difficulties arose to make trouble between them.

"My darling," began Harold as soon as he caught sight of Letty.

"Little sweetheart," rapturously exclaimed Letty at the same moment.

Each heard the other.

When you remember that it was not a whit more flattering to Letty to be addressed as "darling" than it was to Harold to be called "little," you will understand why each broke the sentence off at that point and stared at the other in silent disapproval. It was not that each did not want the love of the other, but that each preferred to be in suspense a little while to having love thrown at him or her without the asking. It was too much like being drowned in a barrel of sirup.

Letty was the first to recover herself.

"Did you speak?" she asked stiffly.

Harold thought he might have misunderstood her, and he was sure that if she had understood him she was entitled to further explanation.

"I was about to say," he began, his manner showing great embarrassment, "that—that is, I had thought—Letty, the fact is I love you!"

"Harold," replied Letty gravely, almost sternly, "why could you not have waited a moment? I was about to make the same declaration."

"Then I am glad I did not wait," declared Harold fervently. "I like a woman better who does not wear her heart on her sleeve."

"But, little one," added Letty tenderly, "can you not see that your manly modesty demands that you keep your sentiments a secret until the one you love has disclosed hers?"

"I must confess that I cannot," replied Harold. "It is man's duty to propose"—

"Excuse me, sir. It is woman's privilege."

"See here, Letty," said Harold, with sudden decisiveness, "there are some little matters which have got to be settled between us, and we might as well discuss them now. We have been willfully blind since we first became acquainted."

"I am afraid custom has more to do with life than we had imagined," admitted Letty.

"We will assume that we are to be married," continued Harold. "Who is to pay the expenses of the family?"

"Why, I shall do it, of course," replied Letty, surprised that he could ask so foolish a question.

"Indeed you will do nothing of the sort," said Harold firmly.

"But, Harold, it has been the custom for"—

"I don't care a condemn about the custom," interrupted Harold. "Wouldn't I be a fine sort of a man to be dependent on a woman?"

"Can you imagine how I should feel to be dependent on a man?" retorted Letty.

"But," argued Harold, "it is according to nature that woman should raise children and man should work for her and them."

"Nature!" repeated Letty scornfully. "One can illustrate any text from nature. Watch the beasts and the

birds. Does the female bird sit idly by while the male builds the nest?"

"The male certainly is not idle," replied Harold. "In my mind idleness and inferiority are synonymous, and I refuse to accept such a position."

"Yet you would force woman to accept it." Letty was discovering that things which in romances were quite delightful were often not even endurable in real life to one not brought up in the belief that they must be endured.

"It is different with women," replied Harold. "They are most charming in a subordinate position"—

"That is precisely what we think of men," returned Letty calmly.

"Well," said Harold angrily, "you may as well understand once for all that I shall never place myself in a position of dependence. I wouldn't do it for the best woman living."

"Nor I for the best man," replied Letty, with equal spirit.

Letty and Harold had reached a point in their walk where the road crossed the park in opposite directions. Without a word of explanation each took a separate path.

Harold had gone but a few steps when he was met by Mary.

"Yes," she said, replying to his look of inquiry, "I overheard every word. I thought it would come to this."

Mary looked as if she would like to add that she was not sorry, but if she thought it she kept her thought to herself. She had made herself very useful to Harold in many ways since the day she shot at him, and the two had become very good friends. Harold believed that Mary had opened her eyes to her own folly, and that he need

not fear any further confessions of love on her part, and Mary had bravely decided that since she could not win Harold's love she would at least deserve his friendship. They had talked together a great deal about the delights of the nineteenth century. Harold had quite forgotten the annoyances of the day and joined with Mary in wondering how a condition so perfect could have led to the war of revolution between the sexes.

Harold had told Mary of his hope to win Letty and now looked to her for the sympathy which she had always shown when he was in distress.

Mary understood and determined to be equal to his expectations, though her heart broke.

"I think," she said quietly, "that you have not understood Letty. She has always declared that she would not marry until she could find a man whom she would find companionable"—

"That is precisely the quality which I desired in a wife," interrupted Harold.

"Yet neither of you treat the other as I should imagine a companion would wish to be treated. Each seems to me to be struggling for the mastery. You are willing that Letty should be twentieth century except where her ideas of the fitness of things come into collision with your own. Letty is delighted with a nineteenth century man except when he would force her to bow to customs which would rob her of her cherished independence. Let me tell you, Harold, that Letty can never be like her grandmother."

"I have not said that I desire it."

"You have repeatedly spoken to her of that lady as being everything desirable. History tells us that she was a very ordinary young woman, rather pretty, but ex-

tremely sentimental and possessed of very little independence. Letty can never be like that. She is too"—

Mary's estimate of Letty will never be known, for the conversation was interrupted at this point by a noise which sounded to Harold like the threatening growling of an angry beast. "What in time is that?" he interrupted, but before Mary could reply a fearful apparition appeared before his astonished gaze. It was larger than the largest house he had ever seen. At times it appeared to be perfectly round, and it rolled along the ground with a force that must have crushed even the largest of the huge trees had it not flattened itself so as to avoid them. As it came nearer the sound of growling increased to that of the rumble of heavy thunder, and pent up lightning seemed to shine from its myriad eyes.

"It is coming this way," gasped Mary. "Harold, have you ever worked?"

"No," replied Harold. "Why should I? My father's wealth"—

"Will not save you," interrupted Mary. "That"—pointing to the terrible thing swiftly rolling toward them—"that is the 'Colossal Scheme.'"

Even as she spoke she took Harold by the shoulders, and with almost superhuman strength tossed him to one side. The huge creature rolled on, leaving poor Mary crushed to death on the very spot where but a second before she had been so full of life and strength. A crowd of mourners soon gathered about her prostrate form.

"It is fate," said the more philosophical among them. "No great Scheme was ever set on foot for the benefit of humanity that did not count its innocent victims by scores before it began to operate successfully."

"But what is this Scheme?" inquired Harold.

"It was started," explained the Liveforever, "for the purpose of annihilating those individuals who are born tired. I presume it was in search of you, who have as yet made yourself needful to no one; but, as you see, our noble Mary has given her life for yours. Young man, you must work for a living, either as housekeeper, shop-boy, chamberman, nurseboy or retailer of system supplies."

Harold was about to declare himself in favor of the last mentioned alternative when Letty, who had been bending over Mary, came to his side and placed her hand on his arm.

"Harold," she said softly, "should you prefer to have me like my grandmother?"

"Letty," he retorted, "should you prefer to have me like my kinsman, Mr. James Winthrop?"

Then the lovers looked into each other's eyes and smiled. They realized that each was dependent on the other—made so by a love which was stronger than the prejudices of either—and simultaneously they agreed to strike a compromise.

"We will spend our lives," said Harold, "in trying to teach that what one thinks is right because it seems to be in the natural order of things is more often right only because custom has taught us to so regard it."

"We will," added Letty, "look forward to a day when we shall have taught people to consider a condition right because based upon principles of exact and impartial justice."

THE TAX ON BACHELORS.

CHAPTER I.

In the year 1932 the tax on bachelors was unusually high, and genial Tom Wainwright was disposed to evade it, if possible. It was due on the first day of the new year, and Miss Alice Griggs had rejected him early in May. It was now the middle of November, and as more than six months had elapsed since that rejection he knew it would not be recognized in the eyes of the law as a sufficient reason why he should not be taxed. He had given no other young lady an opportunity to say "No," an oversight which he regretted now.

In the state where he lived there was a law to the effect that every bachelor should be taxed who could not show a written rejection or in other ways give proof that he had proposed matrimony to some eligible young lady and had been refused within a period of six months. It was determined to resort to every lawful means to break up the unmarried condition which forced so many women to compete with men in the labor market. Taxes were levied in accordance with the eligibility of the bachelor, and the money derived therefrom was used in the support of unprotected women.

Tom Wainwright, being thirty years of age, handsome,

prosperous and in every way able to care for a wife, had for five years been obliged to pay a tax which he considered out of all reason. Not only that, but he knew that for the next ten years the tax would be steadily increased. He had on several occasions evaded it by engaging himself to some attractive maiden, then, when the danger of taxation was past for that year, causing a quarrel which resulted in his dismissal, but the authorities had become suspicious, and Tom had reason to believe that another such event would be closely investigated. Clearly he must find some new and yet plausible way to evade the tax on bachelors this year or deprive himself of many luxuries which he was sure he could not do without.

Down at his clubhouse his friends were entertaining a guest from abroad, and Tom ought to have shed the light of his cheerful smile on the scene. He knew very well that the fellows never enjoyed themselves quite so well when he was absent, but he felt in no mood for merry-making to-night. He donned dressing gown and slippers, set a box of choice cigars on the table, which he pushed close beside the open grate; then, throwing himself into his most inviting easy chair, gave himself to the problem which confronted him. He had thought of no feasible solution when, the guest from abroad having been sufficiently entertained, Tom was joined by Sander Ridgway, his most intimate club friend.

"What's up, old fellow?" asked Sander, helping himself to an easy chair and a cigar. "We missed you at the club."

"I was too stupid to make a decent appearance, so preferred to remain at home. Have a good time?"

"Tiptop! I wish you could have met that fellow, Tom.

What ails you, anyhow? You look decidedly morbid."

"I feel morbid. Business has been dull the past year, and it is almost time for that confounded matrimonial tax."

"You must have a big one to pay to make you look like this."

"It was five thousand dollars last year, and it will be heavier this. Confound such a law, anyhow! I believe it would be better to let women scratch for themselves, as they used to do in the good old days of our grandmothers."

"Oh, I don't know about that! Women's work cheapens labor, you know. That is one reason why the matrimonial tax became a law. And, after all, you would not like to see women obliged to care for themselves. It would look very bad for the men."

"I know it, Sander. I presume I'm selfish, but, really, this tax is as hard to pay as a doctor's bill."

"Then why don't you marry? You could support a wife on five thousand dollars a year."

"I have not yet seen any one who was worth the price of my freedom. No, thank you, Sander, I'd rather pay the money and live alone. But I don't see just where the money is to come from. That's the rub. I shall be obliged to take a cheaper room, discharge my valet, take meals at a second-class restaurant and smoke five-centers."

"That's where the law gets in its work, my boy. By a steadily increasing pressure of self-denial it hopes"—

"It is outrageous!"

"It gives you a choice. For my part I prefer matrimony."

"Is that a fact?"

"It is."

"Who is the young lady?"

"Miss Alice Griggs."

"O-h-h-h! Ahem! Is that—is that why she refused me?"

"I presume it had something to do with it, my boy. She is a very sensible young lady."

"Tastes differ. However, I think she is. I congratulate you, Sander. You know, of course, that there was no serious lovemaking between us."

"To be sure. Alice said she suspected that you were fishing for a refusal, and so she accommodated you."

"I wish I had not given her the opportunity quite so early in the season. It might have helped me out of this difficulty had I been less premature with my proposal."

"Why don't you become engaged again?" asked Sander.

"I have gone my limit in that direction," replied Tom. "If I am a party to another broken engagement, I shall be subject to a heavy fine."

"You are in a bad fix, old fellow, and that's a fact. Still you might let the next engagement run for the three years allowed, and then perhaps you would be better fixed financially, and the fine would not trouble you."

"I wonder how that would work." Tom's face brightened perceptibly. "In the meantime I should have the money that would otherwise be spent in the matrimonial tax to apply toward the payment of the fine, and it would be a great help out of present difficulties."

"If you could find some girl in whom you could con-

fide—some one who would agree to dismiss you at the end of the three years”—

“I should be in trouble if she did not. When a man breaks the engagement at any time, it is bad enough, but if he does so after allowing it to run three years the law has no mercy on him. It would mean financial ruin.”

“Clarissa Pearce is a sensible sort of girl”—

“I’d rather be dead than be obliged to marry her. She would never let me off of her own accord. Besides she is twenty-eight or twenty-nine years old. She would not make such an arrangement unless she thought me in earnest, for it would deprive her of her pension.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Don’t you know that if a woman receives no proposal of marriage between the twenty-fifth and thirtieth years she receives an extra amount of money on pay day which is called a pension for the unprotected? This pension is paid once in three years, after the age of thirty, to those who have not rejected a suitor since the last payment. Even if I could make up my mind to act as Miss Clarissa’s escort during the next three years I doubt if she would be willing to consent to the arrangement, unless she meant to hold me to it at the end of that time.”

“I had forgotten the pension law. It would deprive Miss Clarissa of two payments.”

“And I should be taking an awful risk. No, Sander, it won’t do. We must think of something else.”

For several minutes there was silence between the two young men. Then Sander startled his friend by springing to his feet with a most exultant shout.

“I have it!” he said. “Tom, I can help you out of this scrape like magic. I know the very girl.”

"You do? Old boy, if you help me now, I'll never forget it."

"I have a cousin"—

"Have I seen her?"

"No, she lives in the country."

"Pretty?"

"Pretty as a picture—graceful, too, and very well read. She is a stunner and no mistake, but"—

"Well, don't hesitate. But what?"

"She has an awful temper."

"That doesn't count. I may show you an interesting case of 'Taming of the Shrew.' It would add variety to my humdrum existence. Really, I believe I should like it."

"Well, supposing you sit down and write a note explaining the situation fully. Daisy hates anything like deceit."

"Do you mean that I must tell her that I want to be engaged to her for a period as long as the law allows that I may evade the matrimonial tax, and that she must agree beforehand to dismiss me at the end of that time?"

"Precisely. Daisy would try to make life a burden to you if she thought you were deceiving her."

"Do you suppose she would consent to such an arrangement?"

"I think so. She wishes to study music and has decided not to marry before her twenty-sixth birthday. She is twenty-one now and has property enough to enable her to take care of herself, so she cares nothing for the maiden's pay day. I think she would like an escort who would not trouble her with a lover's importunities and

who would act as a shield between herself and possible lovers."

"It will do no harm to propose, at any rate."

Tom wrote the letter, as his friend had suggested, sealed it carefully, addressed it to Miss Margaret Blake and gave it to Sander to deliver. Sander inclosed it in one giving full particulars, and in due time Tom received the following reply:

Mr. Tom Wainwright:

Dear Sir—I have just finished reading your proposal and my cousin's pleasant account of you, which he was so good as to send with the proposal. In reply, I will say that I agree to consider myself your betrothed for a period of three years and to release you at the end of that time, provided you conduct yourself as a gentleman should toward the lady whom he esteems highly, but does not expect to marry. I do not like endearments, but I understand that society is somewhat exacting in regard to the behavior of engaged people, and I shall try to so conduct myself that we may not be commented upon. I can see that you would prefer not to have it known that we are engaged simply for convenience. It will please me to have a desirable escort during my stay in town, and Cousin Sander assures me that I shall find you simply perfect. I wonder what he has told you about me. That I have an abominable temper, I presume. He considers that my chief characteristic. Well, it is bad, but console yourself with the thought that, so far as I know, it is the only fault I have! And I am not cross when things go to suit me. If you prove a satisfactory escort, I presume you will never know from experience that I am not simply angelic! Yours truly,

Margaret Blake.

Tom found this letter quite satisfactory and could hardly wait for the day when he was to see Miss Margaret, or Daisy, as her cousin called her, and as he liked to think of her. A number of his best friends knew of his good fortune in finding a charming girl who was willing to be engaged to him for a period of three years and to give him his liberty at the end of that time.

"It will," he explained, "not deprive me of my freedom

in any sense of the term. In fact, it will give me greater freedom. I can be pleasant with other girls without their thinking that I am making love, and even if I should fall in love with one of them my engagement to Daisy will not prevent me from explaining matters to the other girl and declaring my sentiments."

It was really quite a nice arrangement, and Tom would not have had a moment's uneasiness before he met Miss Margaret had he not overheard two of his friends talking about him one day at dinner.

"I wouldn't have believed Tom Wainwright would be so simple," said one of them, "as to go and engage himself to a girl whom he had never seen."

"He depended upon Ridgway's judgment, I understand," replied the other.

"But she is Ridgway's cousin, and one is always blind to the defects of one's relatives. Besides did you ever know Ridgway to be acquainted with any girl who was not charming? All girls are alike in his eyes. He has no more judgment than a Hottentot."

"There is no one," replied the other speaker, "whom I would rather see caught than Tom Wainwright. He is so fastidious! Think what it would mean to him to be obliged to escort an ugly woman for three long years and see Sander walking away with pretty Alice Griggs!"

CHAPTER II.

Tom was decidedly uncomfortable when he left the table. His discomfort increased as the day on which Miss Margaret was to arrive drew nearer. He was very

nervous when he went to the station with Sander to meet her. He had hoped to meet her before it became necessary to announce the engagement, but she was delayed in her preparations, and it was nearly Christmas when she reached the city. All engagements must be announced before the first day of December or the bachelor was not relieved from the necessity of paying the matrimonial tax.

As Tom paced back and forth in the little waiting room he thought what a notorious joker Sander was and wondered at his own folly in trusting his happiness for the next three years in the hands of any one but himself. Suppose Sander had indulged his passion for playing practical jokes and arranged an engagement between himself and an ancient specimen of humanity who would gladly give up her right to a pension for the sake of posing before the world as the object of a man's affections. Sander had declared that she was stunning, but with Sander that might mean anything or nothing. He would have remembered that at the time of his proposal had he not been so worried over his financial affairs. If Daisy should prove to be what the fellows called "an ugly back number," how they would laugh at him—the elegant Tom Wainwright, who had always prided himself on being first in the estimation of every young lady whom the other fellows raved about!

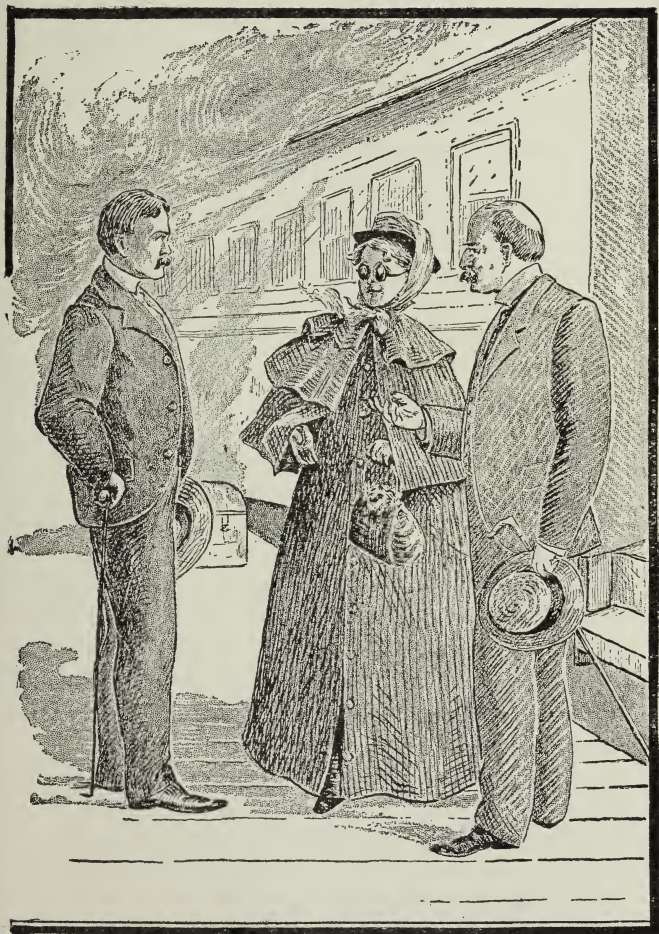
The train came shrieking into view, and Tom felt the pressure of Sander's hand upon his arm. He walked with him to the side of the day coach, arriving just in time to see Sander help a lady to alight and then press a kiss upon her cheek. She had come. Tom could not doubt it, for he had heard Sander call her Daisy. She

had come, and she was a caricature on humanity. It was worse—a hundred times worse—than his worst fears had pictured. Tom could scarcely suppress a groan. He felt himself growing pale to the lips, when he heard his name spoken in a soft voice and realized that Sander had introduced the woman who held his written proposal. He stammered something by way of reply to her greeting and mentally vowed to break off the engagement if it cost him every cent he had in the world. He told himself that beggary was preferable to being seen for three long years in company with such a nightmare of femininity. But he must not be rash. He had just sense enough left to realize that. There were two ways of doing everything, and he was noted for always finding the pleasanter. He allowed Sander to escort Daisy to the waiting room, and, although he walked beside her, he tried to appear more like an acquaintance of the lady than her promised husband. Arrived in the waiting room, he murmured something about being very sorry, but a most pressing engagement—

“I saw that man for you this morning, Tom,” interrupted Sander, with a determined expression on his happy face. “I told him you had a previous engagement, which you had doubtless forgotten, and that he need not expect you until later in the day.”

“Ah! H’m, ahem! Much obliged, I’m sure,” stammered Tom. He saw that Sander understood his little dodge and also that he would brook no trifling.

“Don’t mention it,” replied Sander cheerfully. “I’ll go out to see if the carriage is ready. You bring Daisy in the course of five minutes. I suppose you will be glad of an opportunity to be alone with her.”



She was a caricature on humanity.

Sander bowed gracefully and left them together. Tom felt that Daisy was scrutinizing him sharply, but that did not disturb him so much as the fact that he was also subject to the scrutiny of several of his friends. Whatever happened, he must not let them see that he was not entirely satisfied. He must appear so well pleased with his companion that they would not dare to mention her in his presence. Giving himself a mental shake, he managed to smile into her spectacled eyes as he asked her if she were ready to go to the carriage. He gave her his arm, escorting her with as grand an air as if she had been a queen, but he did not fail to hear the half suppressed titter that followed from the room. It almost unnerved him. The carriage was at the door, but Sander was not to be seen. The small boy whom he had hired to hold the horse told Tom that Mr. Ridgway had gone to see that man whom Mr. Wainwright was to meet at this hour, thinking there might have been a misunderstanding.

A naughty word came close against Tom's smiling lips, but he did not allow it to escape. He handed his companion into the carriage, tucked the robes around her so carefully that much of her objectionable dress of bright green was concealed, took the reins and the whip and drove toward the house where Sander lived with his mother at a rate of speed which was, to say the least, extremely reckless. Miss Margaret was obliged to give her whole attention to an effort to keep her seat, and conversation between herself and her companion did not become intensely interesting.

Good Mrs. Ridgway was watching for them and came to the door to welcome her niece.

"How unusually well you are looking, my dear!" she exclaimed, and once more Tom groaned under his breath. If she looked better than usual now, he thought, what must she be like in a normal condition?

"I shall not invite you in now, Mr. Wainwright," added Mrs. Ridgway, "for I want Daisy all to myself for a little while. You may come later."

"She will soon tire of me," said Daisy, smiling at Tom with an abandonment of sentimental gush that set his teeth on edge. "It doesn't seem to take any one long to tire of me," she added plaintively. "You can't think how nice it seems to be bound to some one who is as glad to devote himself to me as I am to have him."

Tom bowed and tried to smile. He could not say a word. He did not know which he wanted most—to commit suicide or murder.

"Tire of her!" he thought as he went toward his room. "I don't see how any one can help it who has eyes and ears."

Going to his rooms, Tom found Sander comfortably ensconced in his favorite easy chair.

"Thought I'd make myself at home," he announced cheerfully.

"See here, Ridgway," exclaimed Tom, paying no attention to his friend's remark, "joking is well enough, but when it comes to unmitigated falsifying it is downright low."

"Will you please explain yourself?" said Sander, a gleam of anger in his eyes.

It suddenly occurred to Tom that Sander's cousin was under discussion and that perhaps one could not be blamed for failing to see the ugliness in one's relatives.

He found himself admitting that it was barely possible that Sander had not been joking at his expense, but the results could hardly have been more unpleasant had he been the victim of a practical joke, and he must get rid of part of his ill feeling by expressing himself indignantly to some one. It was certain that no one was more deserving of such unpleasant attention than Sander Ridgway.

"Are you such a fool," he said, "as to pretend that you believe what you told me?"

"I am not conscious of having lied," replied Sander stiffly. "I may be a fool, but shall not be twitted of it a great many times, let me tell you."

There was a tone in Sander's voice that was new to Tom. It was not pleasant. It seemed to say that two could show ill temper quite as well as one, and that he would come off victorious who was least in the power of the other. Tom saw that if he were to attempt to break the engagement with Daisy he would need the support of his friends, and that least of all could he afford to antagonize Sander. He resolved to control his temper and succeeded, as any man can and does when his interests are at stake.

"Sander," he said, "I have said more than I should, perhaps, but if you could understand how disappointed I am"--

"Disappointed! About what?"

"You told me she was but twenty-one years old."

"I say so now."

"But her hair is gray."

"Did you never hear of hair turning suddenly from sickness? I think, however, that it helps rather than hurts a

young face. You cannot deny that it softens Daisy's face wonderfully. Did you notice what pretty eyes she has?"

"How could I see her eyes through colored glasses?"

"Oh, I remember! She wore her goggles. She does not wear them all the time. Perhaps she will be without them this evening. Hasn't she a pretty complexion?"

"That hideous green thing she wore"—

"Do you mean that woolen veil? She is subject to attacks of neuralgia and is obliged to be very careful when traveling. She will not be likely to wear that very much here in the city."

"Will she wear it at all?"

"She may. One can never tell exactly what a woman will do—especially a woman like Daisy. As I have told you, she is very willful and has a high temper, but you know you thought that rather an advantage."

Tom bit his lip savagely. He remembered his foolish speech about "Taming of the Shrew" and wished he had not made it. He had indulged in some delightful day dreams in which he and a beautiful young girl figured and where she had always acknowledged his supremacy in the most charming manner, and all the fellows had looked on admiringly and envied him his good luck and fascinating demeanor. The remembrance of that dream did not tend to make the reality any more delightful in his eyes.

"I must admit," continued Sander, noticing that Tom did not seem disposed to reply to his question, "that Daisy does not show good taste in dress. I did not notice that when I saw her in the country. Such things are more a matter of comparison than anything else, I

fancy. She must learn how to dress like city girls. I'm sure she will not object to a few suggestions from you when she has learned to know you well. You have such a taking way with girls, you know, and already Daisy seems anxious to please you. She is very conscientious. When she undertakes to do a thing, she does her best."

Sander talked with boyish enthusiasm, and Tom found it quite impossible to say what he had in mind. He was not sure, when Sander rose to go, whether his friend had played a practical joke on him or not. He promised to call in the evening, and as soon as Sander had had time to get well out of sight he put on his hat and overcoat and started for the office of his lawyer.

"I thought so, my dear boy," chuckled Sander from a doorway where he had been watching for Tom. "You are going to see your lawyer. How should you feel if you knew I had already been there. Oh, Jemima, what a lark this is! I'll go to the club now and ask a few of the fellows if they would not like to drop in informally and see Tom entertain Daisy."

"Parkhurst," said Tom, taking a chair opposite his lawyer, "I'm in a bad fix."

"What's up now?"

"Oh, it's all on account of that beastly matrimonial tax. You know how impossible it would be for me to pay it this year"—

"Not exactly impossible, Wainwright."

"Yes, impossible unless I oblige myself to live without everything to which I have been accustomed."

"Would that be so hard?"

"It would be extremely unpleasant."

"But think to what use your money would be put. You

forget that this tax is levied that women may have a few of the luxuries which you have in such abundance."

"I forget nothing of the sort. Of course I am willing to pay a fair share toward their support, but you know that I have always been taxed beyond reason."

"I think there are few of us who would not find fault with almost any rate of taxation. Well, what can I do for you?"

"First, forget what I have said if you can," replied Tom, with a sudden change of tone. "A man must grumble about something, I suppose, or he would not be human. It might as well be taxes as anything else. I presume I shall be taxed nearly six thousand dollars this year, shall I not?"

"I may get it reduced four or five hundred by proving that your financial condition does not warrant so large a rate of taxation."

"That would really be proclaiming that I am hard up. No, don't do that. If I must sink, I prefer to sink with flying colors."

"Who is talking of sinking?"

"I am. I tell you, Parkhurst, I have got myself in a tight place."

"How so?"

"Suppose I am obliged to fight a breach of promise case?"

"You can't afford it this year, my boy. It would mean financial ruin."

"I am afraid I shall have to do it, ruin or no ruin. I very foolishly proposed to Ridgway's cousin and was accepted"—

"Do you refer to Miss Margaret Blake?"

"Yes. Do you know her.

"Very well. Tom, you surprise me. Why did you do that?"

"I had not seen her"—

"I should think not!" This was said with such energy that Tom was sure the lawyer had no higher opinion of the personal appearance of the young lady in question than he himself had formed.

"Sander has always seemed to be a friend whom one could trust," he said apologetically. "We have told each other everything for the last five years. He saw that I was worried about that beastly tax and suggested this plan as a way out of the difficulty. He represented Miss Blake as beautiful, graceful—everything, in fact, that a man could ask for except that she might be a little too high tempered."

"Ridgway always worshiped his cousin. Still, I must say that you have shown a surprising lack of common sense. Had you thought of buying a horse of Ridgway you would have insisted on seeing it first."

"I didn't have much time, you know."

"Oh, well, I guess it is not as bad as it might be. Miss Blake is quite musical, and she has very pleasant manners, I believe; at least they seemed pleasant in the country. I can hardly think of her as a city girl. I have an idea that she will appear very differently from the girls upon whom you have usually danced attendance."

"I am sure of it," groaned Tom. "Parkhurst, I'm thinking of breaking the engagement."

"Have you counted the cost?"

"I presume it will pinch me for a year or two."

"Pinch you! Man alive, it will ruin your prospects for life. Not only will there be a heavy fine for the broken engagement, but the breach of promise suit"—

"Perhaps Miss Blake will not sue"—

"Don't flatter yourself. She will. I know her better than you do. She will like nothing better. It will give her just the advertisement she wants before becoming a public singer."

"Does she mean to study for the stage?"

"So I am told."

"Worse and worse." Tom groaned more dismally than before. He looked so wretched that the lawyer's heart became almost sympathetic. There was silence between the two men for several minutes. Then Parkhurst said seriously:

"I don't believe I should break that engagement if I were you, Tom."

"How can I go on? I have virtually promised to appear with her in society, and if I should break even that part of the contract"—

"She has you in her power and no mistake. Should you lose everything, you would be in a more unhappy condition than you would should you play the devoted lover to Daisy. You may be chaffed for your odd preference, but if you carry yourself well it will only be considered one of your oddities, while if you throw your property away you will not be thought worthy even so much notice as is given to those whom we chaff. You will, besides, subject yourself to most uncomfortable personal experiences."

Parkhurst was convincing in any argument. He offered to go with Tom to call on Daisy, and when the two

men stood on the steps of Sander's home Tom was quite prepared to try to play the part which he had taken upon himself in his effort to evade the tax on bachelors. But when he entered the room his courage nearly failed him. He would have left the house at once could he have done so without observation.

"Never mind," whispered the lawyer. "She will learn to dress better when she has been in the city awhile."

"Bare arms and shoulders!" groaned Tom. "And all those men around her! I wonder that they don't offer her a shawl."

"Society ladies always used to dress in that way," replied the lawyer. "I presume your mother's gowns were cut that way."

"Do you suppose my mother painted her face as well?" asked Tom witheringly.

"I should not be at all surprised were I to be assured of that fact. Ladies used to consider their toilet but half made until they had painted their faces. Daisy, in her effort to create a sensation, is slightly behind the times, but"—

CHAPTER III.

The conversation was interrupted by that young lady, who came forward to meet them, with both hands extended and her gown trailing behind her in a way that disgusted Tom beyond measure. He had read of women who wore trailing gowns, but it had never been his misfortune to see one until now. To his fastidious mind it

seemed shockingly untidy, and an untidy woman was, in his opinion, the most pitiable spectacle imaginable.

"I thought you were never coming, Tom, dear," said Daisy, taking his hands in hers and smiling up into his face. "And now that you are here I have a great mind to keep you all to myself."

"I want to get acquainted with him," she added, speaking to Mr. Parkhurst. "I presume you know that we are engaged to be married?"

"Tom has told me. I'll offer congratulations when we are alone."

"I believe he means to kiss me," replied Daisy, looking at Tom. "Shall you allow that?"

"I will answer when I am sure of his intentions," replied poor Tom.

"He thinks you could not make up your mind to do it," said Daisy, turning to Mr. Parkhurst. "He doesn't know how we behaved when you were in Wheatlands, does he? It seems ever so nice to see you again, dear Mr. Parkhurst. Let us sit together on that couch in the corner, where we can talk over old times."

"I thought you were going to give your exclusive attention to Tom?"

"I have changed my mind. Tom has a squint that makes my eyes ache, and his ears are ever so much too large. I think I shall like him better if I see very little of him. It is quite necessary, you know, that we should avoid becoming too antagonistic, for we must spend a great deal of time together."

Daisy's voice was soft and sweet, but very clear. Tom was quite sure that several of the callers who had happened in had heard her allusion to his squinting eyes and

his large ears—the only defects by which nature had sought to mar an otherwise perfect exterior. Tom was very sensitive concerning these defects, and his friends had humored his sensitiveness for so long a time that he had begun to believe that no one noticed them but himself. Miss Daisy's criticism did not serve to increase his love for her.

Tom tried to make himself entertaining to Stella Manning, another of Mrs. Ridgway's nieces, but he could not keep his attention from wandering to the little figure in the gay gown of black and yellow satin sitting beside Parkhurst.

"You don't like her dress, I see," said Stella, following his glance of cold disapproval. "Daisy always did have the oddest taste in dress, and no one can persuade her that it is not perfect. Gray hair, smoked glasses, bare arms and shoulders, painted face, corsets and bustle. Did ever any one see such a combination?"

"It is not modern, certainly," replied Tom, trying not to sneer. "I believe there was a time when all society ladies dressed in that way. In these days of obedience to the laws of beauty it hardly seems possible."

"Daisy has a perfect mania for collecting old things. They say it is a characteristic handed down from a grandmother, who would give as much as would make a poor family comfortable for a year to possess a rickety chair or a soiled head rest or any equally useless thing that had been owned by a person of distinction."

"Do you know that to be a fact?" asked Tom eagerly. It had occurred to him that if such a mania could be proved he would have sufficiently good grounds for breaking his engagement to Daisy. The law was not

meant to enforce marriage with one who had so questionable an inheritance for the coming generations.

"I do not know Daisy intimately," confessed Stella, "although she is a cousin, but I have reason to believe it is a fact. A great many persons have told me so."

"Can you give me the name of any of them?"

"You seem to doubt me," replied Stella coldly. "I ought to have remembered that you would naturally require proof of anything said against the young lady to whom you are betrothed."

There was a peculiar emphasis on the word "young" that Tom did not fail to notice, but what troubled him most was the very evident fact that Stella was displeased. He felt that she had information which might be of great use to him, and that he must exert himself to propitiate her.

"I asked," he said quickly, "not because I doubted you—please believe I could not do that—but for an entirely different reason which I should prefer not to mention just at present."

"I beg that you will not mention it at all," interrupted Stella, with an asperity that caused Tom to wonder whether there might not be more than one of Sander's cousins who had a bad temper. "Excuse me, please," she added, with frigid politeness. "I wish to speak with auntie."

Stella crossed the room and pretended to button her aunt's glove while she murmured: "Oh, my unfortunate tongue! I'm dying to laugh, auntie. I came very near getting myself into trouble just now."

It was decided that evening that Daisy should attend her first reception on the following week. It was to be

given at the elegant home of the De Quinceys, who were considered the wealthiest, most refined and most benevolent family in the state.

"Will this dress do to wear?" asked Daisy of Tom when the reception had been planned by Mrs. De Quincey and indorsed by Mrs. Ridgway. "I want to please you," she added, "since it will be the first time we will appear in society together."

"If you will pardon me for saying so," replied Tom coldly, "I do not like this dress at all."

"Do you not like colors? I see so many ladies here in white."

"I do not like colors, and I detest stripes and spots and checks and everything which tends to make a woman look like a peacock."

"I am so glad I have a white dress," replied Daisy as sweetly as if Tom had not been in the least ungentlemanly in his manner of speech. "It is of white silk," she added, "so stiff as almost to stand alone, and it rustles when I walk, like wind blowing through the corn. It has a train three yards long, and there are no sleeves at all—just a little strap over the shoulders. It is trimmed with passementeries which sparkle with every movement, and I have some beautiful jewels which were left me by my grandmother. Do not fear that I shall not make a sensation. Even you, who, I am told, have broken the hearts of so many girls, cannot fail to be satisfied with my appearance. It will be simply stunning."

Think what that was to hear from the lips of a girl to whom one was betrothed, in a land where the perfection of style was expressed in the words "beauty unadorned adorned the most"; where jewelry and beads and passe-

menteries were looked upon as relics of barbarism ; where only savages dressed themselves in colors ; where the natural form and complexion were considered most beautiful ; where trailing skirts were looked upon as an almost unpardonable evidence of untidiness ! Think how it must have sounded in the ears of a man who was the acknowledged leader in the art of beautiful dressing. The fastidious Tom could not find words to express his disapprobation of the gown she described. It seemed to him that, in the face of such utter lack of appreciation of the beautiful, nothing he could say would have the slightest effect. He was reduced to a state of helpless speechlessness quite foreign to him, but his companion chatted as incessantly as if she believed him to be infatuated with her conversational powers.

Tom could not but admit that her voice was exquisitely sweet and well modulated. It vibrated most pleasantly upon his sensitive ear, and its charm was not diminished by the use of poor diction and a faulty pronunciation. It would have been a delight to him to listen to her could he have sat with closed eyes, even though she talked only of trivial things. She reminded him of the characters portrayed in some of the novels which were supposed to represent society as it was between the years 1870 and 1886. In his fine condemnation of that age, as represented by Daisy, he failed to see that he himself showed a share of the inheritance handed down by the parents of those days in that love of luxurious ease which had been sufficiently strong to tempt him to place himself in his present unhappy position.

"I think, Mr. Wainwright," said Daisy quite suddenly, "that already you repent your proposal. Am I not good

enough in your opinion to help you evade a tax which every honorable man should be willing to pay? Or do you think yourself worthy of the best, no matter what use you wish to make of her? Does your exquisite taste rob you of the instincts of true manhood?"

There was a touch of sarcasm in the soft voice that cut Tom like a knife. He tried to give her to understand that he would not tolerate such insinuations, even from a woman, but he could not speak. She had shown him a picture of himself which he despised, yet which he could not deny.

"I intend," continued Daisy, rising and confronting him, "I intend to hold you to your proposal, because it suits my convenience to do so, but I wish you to understand that you have not inspired my respect and that I do not care to see you except when you must appear as my escort. I am disappointed in you. I had thought, judging by what my cousin wrote, that you were a gentleman."

"May I ask how I have displeased you?" asked Tom coldly.

"You have shown that you are disappointed because I am less beautiful than Sander pictured me. Do not try to deny it. I have seen it in your eyes from the first, but I should like to ask who and what you are that you give yourself the right to criticise my personal appearance. A man who, to continue his selfish indulgence, will resort to such methods as I am helping you to carry out, and who, instead of showing proper appreciation of my good intentions, sulks in a manner most conspicuous and insulting because I am not as beautiful as a picture! You shall carry out your part of our contract, Mr. Wain-

wright, or suffer the consequences. I shall expect you to be here in good season to escort me to Mrs. De Quincy's, but I do not care to see you again in the meantime. You need not fear that I shall exact much attention from you when once we are there. I am not quite so unattractive as that would imply."

She swept him a mocking bow, and, walking away with the air of an empress, joined the party of young people who had gathered around the piano in the music room. The next moment Tom heard her singing with young De Quincy, and, angry as he was, he could not help paying a silent tribute to her beautiful voice.

"If she were only half civilized," he mused, "and not quite so ugly—but, no, even her voice does not make her endurable!"

Tom quietly left the house, without a word of parting to any one, and made his way to his own room. He had never been more thoroughly wretched. He felt that, in one respect, Sander's description of his cousin had not been at fault—she did have a temper!

"Heavens," he thought, "what a punishment it would be to a man to be obliged to go through life with such a virago!"

CHAPTER IV.

During the days which followed, Tom grew thin. His appetite fled, and lines of worry were deeply drawn in his face. His lawyer assured him that he was a fool for showing his annoyance so plainly and by that means giv-

ing his friends so good an opportunity to discuss his affairs.

"They will mistrust that you are hard up," he said, "and then you will lose prestige. I am ashamed of you, Tom. Why don't you brace up and be a man about it?"

"I wish you were in my boots, Parkhurst"—began Tom.

"I should like it of all things, my boy! Handsome, refined, popular, wealthy—what more can a man ask? As for Miss Daisy, you are blinder than you need to be about her. She has a certain power of attraction that more than one of your acquaintances seems to appreciate. I saw her out riding yesterday with young De Quincey and to-day with Walton Humphrey."

"You didn't!" exclaimed Tom in amazement.

"I certainly did. You might have seen her also had you not been moping here in your room. There have not been so many callers at the Ridgways in years as there have been since Miss Daisy came to the city."

Tom brightened up under the influence of the lawyer's information. It is wonderful how much easier it is to endure a person when one discovers that he is sought for among the idlers of society. Tom began to think that he might at least endure what De Quincey and Humphrey deliberately sought. He began at once to make preparations to attend the reception at the De Quinceys. Half an hour ago he had decided to send word that he was too ill to go, trusting that she might accept the excuse. He decided to dress himself with even more than his usual care and to appear so brilliant that his unhappy manner during that last evening at the Ridgways would be credited to the premonitory symptoms of the

indisposition which had followed. He was grateful now to Parkhurst for having spread the report that he was not feeling well, although he had been annoyed when his friends began dropping in to make inquiries concerning his health.

Tom never looked better than he did when standing before the grate in Mrs. Ridgway's sitting room, waiting for the appearance of Daisy. He heard her voice in the hall, and, summoning a polite smile to his face, turned to greet her. The heavy draperies before the door were pushed aside. Tom advanced a step or two and stood face to face with a vision of loveliness which fairly took his breath away. The smile became more genial as he softly explained that he was expecting to see Miss Blake.

"I am Miss Blake," replied the girl quietly.

It was Daisy's voice surely, but what had become of the gray hair and the smoked glasses? Where were the heavy eyebrows which had met so sternly over the glasses? Where was the unsightly black patch which had adorned one cheek? Where was the ugly wart which he had seen on the side of her nose?

"You are disappointed once more, I perceive," said Daisy, breaking the uncomfortable silence which had fallen between them.

"I presume I might as well explain, Mr. Wainwright, that I have been acting a part. I wished to convince myself that you were as perfect as my cousin Sander represented you to be. Shall we go now? It is growing late."

"You were fortunate in having such able assistants to make your little comedy so enjoyable," said Tom coldly.

"Oh, you need not blame your friends! No one wanted

to do it at first, but I persuaded them to change their minds. Sander may not have told you that I usually have my own way."

Once more Tom was speechless. It was not difficult for him to believe that so charming a girl always had her own way. He would have turned against any friend he had for the sake of pleasing her, but to have his friends turn against him was different.

"I suppose Parkhurst knew," he said after he had helped Daisy into the carriage and taken a seat beside her.

"Oh, yes," replied Daisy, changing to the seat opposite, "Mr. Parkhurst knew. He was difficult to persuade, however!"

Tom thought how Parkhurst had tried to persuade him to appear perfectly satisfied with his engagement to Miss Daisy, and he could see that if he had followed his lawyer's advice he would now be in a position to laugh at his tormentors. Tom realized that he had blundered, and he did not know how to retrieve himself. He cursed himself and all his friends, but that did not help matters in the least. In a few moments the carriage would stop before the door of the De Quinceys, and the silence between himself and that vision of loveliness opposite was rapidly becoming more uncomfortable. Tom would have liked to establish a friendly relation before he met his friends, thinking that by so doing he could make his own position less difficult.

"I presume," he began, "that there is no explanation"—

"I think I shall find it easier to forget if you say nothing," interrupted Daisy coldly.

Tom ventured no further remark, and the two entered the house in silence.

"Why did you do it?" asked Tom of Parkhurst, when a little later he had the pleasure of seeing Daisy surrounded by the most eligible young men in the room and making herself delightfully agreeable to every one but himself.

"Because, Tom," replied the old lawyer gravely, "I thought it would do you good. So did Mrs. Ridgway, who, as you know, has always taken a motherly interest in you. You will pardon me for saying that you were becoming too firmly impressed with the belief that the best of everything belonged by right to yourself. Do not get angry with me for saying so. Remember that I was an old friend of your father."

Tom was angry. He was angry, and the more he thought of it the angrier he became. It was quite natural that he should be, and his friends appreciated that fact, and bore with him as patiently as possible, believing that before many days he would be himself again.

"Tom," said Parkhurst, "take my advice and appear to enjoy yourself. You look like a thundercloud. Keep your eyes away from Miss Daisy. Leave her as severely alone as she could possibly desire and give your attention to the other young ladies, as you used to do."

This time Tom saw that the lawyer's advice was good, and he tried to act upon it from that moment. He never spoke to Daisy unless it was absolutely necessary, and no one guessed how much of self denial he practiced in consequence. He was soon on as good terms as ever with his friends and was the idol of society, as he had always been. The young ladies raved over him, but he could

not win one smile from Daisy, except when she thought it was demanded by the rules of politeness. She was the personification of iciness whenever they happened to be alone together.

At first Tom had laughed lightly when his friends mentioned her evident avoidance of him, but there came a time when he could not bear it and when his flashing eyes warned them that it was a subject which he would not hear discussed. There came a time when Tom realized that Daisy held his happiness in her keeping, and that it was a matter of indifference to her. There were days when he was filled with a fierce exultation at the thought that she was bound to him for a period of more than two years yet, and that no one could claim superior rights. There were other times when he felt that to see her and to wait upon her and know that he had no part in her life was a torture which was fast becoming greater than he could bear. There were bright mornings when he resolved to win her love or die in the attempt. There were dark nights when he thought of the easiest and surest means of committing suicide. He had played at love a great many times and enjoyed it. He was deeply in love now and was miserable.

How was it with Daisy? It is a question which that young lady would have found difficult had she tried to answer it, but she did not try. She had come to the city fully determined to give the best of herself to her music. She had resolved never to marry, at least not until she had won fame in the musical world. She had entered into the engagement with Tom principally because she believed that by so doing she would be free from importunities of other men which she might otherwise have found

distracting. She was a very earnest young lady, who had brought the whole force of her strong nature to bow before the altar of her ambition. Even her pleasures were enjoyed with the thought that such recreation, if not too often indulged in, would enable her to work more profitably. It had amused her for two reasons to play a part to deceive Tom—she wished to know if she possessed the qualities necessary to a successful actor, and she fancied that it would be more enjoyable than it had proved to be to try the man whom her cousin praised so extravagantly. Daisy was inclined to be cynical in her opinions of men. When she had first seen Tom's face, she had liked it. She told herself afterward that she might have liked its owner better than she should, considering her ambition, had he not proved himself so little of a gentleman. Therefore she was glad that he had behaved just as he did. She believed she had forever dismissed that subject with her disapproval of his conduct, and that now her heart was impregnable so far as he was concerned.

At first Tom's opinions and preferences were really a matter of indifference to Daisy, but no young lady likes to have the most attractive gentleman of her acquaintance attentive to every one but herself. Daisy was not pleased with Tom's behavior. Had she shown her displeasure in the ordinary way she might soon have been the recipient of more attention from him than she would have liked at that time, but she did nothing in the ordinary way, and she deceived even herself as to her opinion of Tom.

She realized that he made her uncomfortable, but she said it was because he was so very ungentlemanly. She was sure that she should always despise a man who judged people entirely by their personal appearance. There was

no dependence to be placed in one whose regard for another was regulated by that other's wealth of natural attractions. She never listened when her friends spoke of the great improvement noticeable in Tom Wainwright during the past year. She preferred to believe that it was impossible for him to overcome the only fault which she had been able to find in him. She assured herself and others that a man with such a fault could pretend anything, but that he was false at heart, and the heart did not change.

CHAPTER V.

Tom and Daisy had been betrothed more than a year when the hop at Calhoun's was proposed, and the proposal heartily indorsed by the young people of their acquaintance. Silas Calhoun was the proprietor of a large hotel built on the shores of a little lake miles away from nowhere—at least that is the way it was described by the enthusiastic guests who congregated there every summer for rest. It was so secluded that society, with its unceasing demands, never found it, and the favored few who kept its location a secret enjoyed themselves as unconventionally as possible. The nearest railway station was five miles distant. The young people, however, did not propose to go to Calhoun's by rail. The roads were in prime condition, and a sleigh ride of 50 miles, divided in the middle by a hot supper and two or three hours spent in dancing while the horses rested, was a prospect much too delightful to be resisted by any young person

with a spark of enthusiasm and vivacity about him. The best horses to be had were engaged for the ride. Tom had no desire to make the trip alone with the coldly silent Daisy and had persuaded a friend to go with him in a double sleigh and take Daisy's cousin Stella.

Sleigh rides like this have been described so much better than I can do it that I shall pass over this part of the story, as well as over the delights which followed when the merry party arrived at Calhoun's.

It was after supper, while they were dancing in the long dining room, that the storm came up. No one noticed it until it was nearly time for the gay party to start on the homeward trip and the jolly host had gone to the barn himself to make sure that the horses had been well cared for. When he came back to the house he told his guests that he believed there would be a blizzard before morning and that it would be safer for them to remain at his place overnight. Then the dancing ceased and eager young people crowded around the door and peered out into the darkness.

"If there should be a blizzard," said Stella, "we might be detained here for several days."

Daisy looked at her quickly, but said nothing. She was thinking of her appointment for the next day with a noted manager who had condescended to try her voice. If he pronounced it good there was hope that a desirable position might be offered her. Daisy was deciding that she should not remain over night at Calhoun's.

"Do you think the storm is close upon us?" asked Sander, who, for reasons which will be easily understood by those who have been in love, did not like to miss the long ride home, under the stars, in the comfortable little sled which was just large enough for Alice and himself.

"I can't tell," replied Mr. Calhoun, stepping farther away from the house that he might get a better look at the heavy bank of clouds in the northwest. "Storms are dreadfully deceptive in this part of the world," he added. "Now, when I was back in York state I could reckon on a storm almost to a minute, but here I've sometimes missed it by an hour or two. However, I think we shall hear from those clouds before long."

"Are you sure there is to be a blizzard?" asked Daisy, who put little faith in the ordinary weather prophet, unless he happened to make a prediction which suited her desires.

"One is never sure of anything in this world," replied the old man. "One thing is certain, and that is there is a great deal of snow in the air already, considering the clouds, which means that a blizzard wind is blowing. If those clouds contain both wind and snow"—

"Do you think it probable, Mr. Calhoun," interrupted Daisy, "that those clouds will break over us in less than an hour?"

"They may not; they look a long way off."

"An hour would give us time to reach the station," said Daisy, "and we could go into the city on the cars."

"But our rigs," interposed Sander.

"Leave them here, and send some one after them," suggested Daisy.

"I am afraid to start when the sky looks like that," said Stella.

"You might stay here, then," replied Daisy. "For my part I prefer to go."

An excited discussion ensued, when it was discovered that Daisy was the only young lady who preferred to risk

the dangers of the storm in order to reach the city. She remarked, most politely, but decidedly, in response to Tom's expostulations, that she meant to make the attempt, but that she did not ask him to risk his life by accompanying her.

"I am determined," she said, "to meet Mr. Gilmore tomorrow, and I have no doubt that I can hire Mr. Calhoun's stable boy to drive me to the station."

"You will not be left to the care of Mr. Calhoun's stable boy," replied Tom coldly. In another moment he was inside his overcoat.

No further opposition was offered to Daisy's plan. Mr. Calhoun insisted on loaning Tom a fresh horse—one that knew the road—and told him he might leave it with the hotel keeper at the railway station, to be cared for until the owner came to claim him. The horse was hitched to Mr. Calhoun's cutter, which had been made expressly for travel over country roads, and plenty of fur robes were wrapped around the occupants.

The air had seemed almost springlike when the young people left the city, but a biting wind had arisen which blew directly in their faces as Tom turned the horse's head toward the railway station. They drove for some time in silence, broken only by the clatter of the horse's hoofs on the frozen snow and the dismal creaking of the sled runners which is always to be heard in very cold weather. The air was rapidly becoming more dense with the frozen sleet, which struck their faces like fierce little darts. The wind was steadily rising, and it seemed to Tom as if it came from every direction at once. In many places the road was made almost impassable by heavy drifts. Not a star was to be seen in the sky, not a ray of

light anywhere which could have been used as a guide. The horse patiently fought his way along, and Tom finally reached the conclusion that the faithful creature knew more about the road than he did himself. He certainly could not have known less, for Tom had been guiding him in a circle for the last half hour. Left to himself, he promptly turned his face homeward, but Tom did not know that.

Notwithstanding the intense darkness Daisy knew that Tom had loosened his hold on the reins.

"Are your hands cold?" she asked quickly. It was the first time she had spoken since she bade her friends good-by at Mr. Calhoun's door.

"I am very comfortable, thank you," replied Tom ironically.

"Why did you drop the reins?"

"Because I can no longer see the road."

"Mr. Wainwright, are we lost?"

"I do not know."

The words could not have been spoken with greater indifference. Tom was not in the happiest mood when he left the Calhoun House. It had seemed to him a reckless proceeding to start out in the face of such a storm, for no better reason than that a girl wished to try her voice before a theatrical manager, but there was not money enough in the world to have tempted him to allow Daisy to go without him. When he found himself alone with her, all his anger was forgotten in his love and in his despair because of its utter hopelessness. Then came the thought that there might be a worse fate than to die with Daisy before they reached the station. He had been ex-

cessively morbid for days, and this new fancy was a not unnatural climax to such a state of mind.

Daisy was irritated over his silence. She felt that she had been foolish in insisting on coming out in such a storm, and she wanted to say so, but it is never easy to introduce such an acknowledgment. She felt that it would be less hard if Tom could be beguiled into conversation.

"I should have thought," she said, with a feeble attempt at playfulness, "that you might have allowed the stable boy to accompany me when you knew I preferred it."

But in a howling wind playful tones are not always apparent. Tom believed that Daisy's remark was intended as a reproach because he had shown himself unable to guide the horse. It angered him so that he could with difficulty control himself.

"Believe me," he said curtly, "had I known that you preferred the company of the stable boy I should not have forced mine upon you."

At this moment there was a sudden jerk of the cutter that nearly unseated them. The horse had plunged into a deep snowdrift and was floundering in an attempt to regain his footing. He recovered himself, gave one leap, which freed him from the cutter, and with a snort disappeared into the darkness.

"Oh," gasped Daisy, "he has left us!"

Tom was himself in a moment. All his petty grievances were forgotten in his desire to make Daisy as comfortable as possible. The true manliness which had won him so many friends in spite of his egotism now asserted itself. Springing from the cutter, he spread one of the robes upon the snow, then held out his hand to Daisy.

"Let me help you out," he said cheerfully. "I am going to tip the cutter over to make a partial shelter against the storm."

"Must we stay here?" faltered Daisy. She was recalling stories she had read of people who had perished in blizzards, and was a little fearful of the consequences of her persistence.

"I can see no better way," replied Tom. "Even if we could walk in such a storm we should not know which way to turn. The horse will doubtless find his way home, and when the stable boy knows you are in danger"—

"Mr. Wainwright, can I help you turn the cutter over?" interrupted Daisy, who did not care to hear more about the stable boy.

"Thanks, no. I think I can manage it."

The sled was soon turned bottom upward against the drift where it had stuck. Tom scooped snow from beneath it until he had succeeded in making a room large enough for two. The robes were spread down, and when he and Daisy had succeeded in crawling under the sled and had placed one of the robes against the opening to their den they were really quite comfortable. The wind piled the snow against them, making them still warmer, and they congratulated themselves on the coziness of their retreat. Notwithstanding the unpleasantness of their position they were far from being unhappy. Indeed Tom was more wildly happy than he had ever been in all his life.

*

*

*

When the first faint blush of crimson appeared in the eastern sky, Calhoun and his guests started on an ex-

ploring expedition and had no sooner left the house than they caught sight of the overturned cutter.

Don't ask me for a detailed account of what followed; neither my pen nor my patience is equal to it. It began with tears and exclamations of joy and ended with happy laughter and merry jests. It is not unlikely that as long as they live Mr. and Mrs. Tom Wainwright will be teased about their experience in Mr. Calhoun's barnyard and their preference for a circular track when driving to a point five miles distant.

When Tom hears a bachelor friend wondering how he can manage to evade the matrimonial tax, he invariably says: "By getting married, my boy. A man is a fool to remain single when it will cost him no more to have a home of his own."

"And if it did cost more?" asks Daisy.

"He would still be a fool," replies Tom.

A SCIENTIFIC COURTSHIP.

I awoke to find myself surrounded by strangers, who were regarding me with an air of deepest interest.

"Howdy friends!" I remarked as nonchalantly as was possible under the circumstances. "How can I serve you?"

There was no reply. They drew a long, deep breath, quite in unison, then jumped from their seats and began shaking hands with one another, taking not the slightest notice of me. They seemed under the spell of an emotion too deep for words.

At this moment my attention was attracted toward a man who sat apart from the others, and nearer the head of the bed, where he gazed at me with piercing eyes that seemed to penetrate my very soul. The others turned toward him, after having greeted one another, as if moved by a strong impulse to offer their hands to him also; but he merely glanced at them, slightly nodding, then once more turned his gaze on me. His companions bowed, almost sweeping the floor with their caps, then, with one accord they broke into a hearty cheer.

"Runjeet Singh!" they cried. "All honor to the great Runjeet Singh!"

Runjeet Singh! the name brought memory back to her

stronghold, and I turned to look more closely at the man sitting so quietly at the head of my bed.

"He is not Runjeet Singh," I exclaimed. "Why do you call him so?"

My companions paid no attention to my query, but looked with troubled eyes at him whom they had called Runjeet Singh. There was evident displeasure in his face, as he arose from his seat and quietly left the room.

"I am a humble minister of the Almighty," he said, at the door. "Give all honor to Him to whom it is due."

"Say!" I exclaimed, as the door closed behind him, "why did you call him Runjeet Singh?"

My companions looked at me very much as their master had looked at them, and then they as silently left the room.

I was alone, and I decided to dress. I strove to assume a sitting posture, but my joints refused to move.

"The scoundrel!" I muttered; "he said I'd come out of it feeling as good as new, and here I am as stiff as a ramrod!"

There was a small bell on the table near my bed. If I could reach it I could summon Runjeet Singh, the man who had induced me to be buried alive. He would doubtless hasten to my assistance. I exerted myself to the uttermost, but I could not move my hand so much as the tenth part of an inch. As for my feet and legs, I had to take them on faith. They had been with me only a little while ago, and they must be yet; but below my neck I was as lifeless as if dead. How deeply I regretted the curiosity that had led me to the study of the occult! How I prayed to be myself again just long enough to punish the man who had induced me to offer myself a

victim to his unholy practices! I lay there, impotently cursing him, when the current of my thoughts was suddenly changed by the unexpected appearance of a young lady. She was standing in the doorway, when I first noticed her, gazing at me exactly as I have seen naturalists study a new kind of bug. It was disconcerting. I felt that something should be said, and since she showed no inclination to speak first, I must necessarily do what I could to break the embarrassing silence.

"Good afternoon!" I said, cheerfully; "did old Martin Van Buren get in?"

"Did—did w-h-a-t?"

The expression on her face led me to believe that she was deaf, so I raised my voice to repeat the question.

"Martin Van Buren! Was he elected? I voted for him—my first vote. Good chap, old Martin!"

"Good chap!" repeated my guest, with a merry laugh. "Good chap, indeed! My friend, if you were better read—but I forget! How could you be!"

"Is that intended for sarcasm?" I asked mildly. "Do you mean that I know it all, or that I'm not bright enough to assimilate more?"

"Neither, my friend. Don't vex yourself without reason. May I come in?"

I grunted an assent. I wanted her to entertain me, of course, but I didn't want to appear too well pleased until I knew whether she came as friend or foe.

"Thanks!" she said, dropping into a chair near my bed, "now I can talk to you comfortably. To begin, Martin Van Buren became president—the good Martin for whom you voted—and within two months the total business failures in New York alone reached the enormous

sum of one hundred millions of dollars. I quote from history. Factories and mills stopped running, and in one year the total debt of the country—”

“Stop!” I gasped. “For Heaven’s sake, stop! My brain reels.”

“Why, what is the matter? Is it possible you have not been told?”

“Told what? But no, let’s get at this thing in a logical manner.”

A frightful idea had taken possession of me. What if Runjeet Singh had kept me buried for an entire year instead of a month, as he had promised? Would not that account for the horrible stiffness I felt in every joint whenever I tried to move?

My guest regarded me with a look in which I saw both amusement and sympathy.

“Well,” she said, “ask questions. Perhaps it will be the best to let you enlighten yourself in your own way.”

“How long has Martin Van Buren been president?”

“He served four years, I believe.”

“Four years!”

“Yes. I’m not a very good historian, but—”

“Historian! Madam, are you crazy?”

“Oh, no. Oh, dear, no! but I’m really afraid you will be before you realize—I wonder where Runjeet Singh can be! He had no right to leave you—”

“Runjeet Singh! Yes, where is he?” I asked eagerly. “Let me get hold of him, just once—Oh, but I’ll—”

“Don’t!” she whispered; “don’t make threats, and please forget that I dared criticize him. It is very rash to say a word against Runjeet Singh.”

“Perhaps discretion is the better part of valor,” I said

meekly, "and just now I couldn't harm a fly." I had no thought, however, of overlooking any opportunity for revenge that might present itself.

"Well," I continued, trying to assume a jocular air, "we might as well continue our lesson! Will you be kind enough to tell me what year this is?"

"To-day is the first of July, 1963," was the startling reply.

I gasped for breath, but recovering myself with a heroic effort, burst into a fit of laughter.

"What a little tease you are!" I said, "but please be good, now. Don't tease any more, there's a good girl! Do you think you are treating me with the consideration I deserve, under the circumstances?"

"I'm trying to," gravely. "It is a difficult position. What is the latest year you can recall?"

"Why, 1837, of course! I don't believe it is later than that now!"

"You must try to believe it. What is your latest recollection?"

"Runjeet Singh was preparing to bury me alive. He buried the Fakir of Lahore, you remember, and unearthed and resuscitated him six weeks later; but there were those who did not believe it was just as it seemed to be, because the Fakir—well, you know how Fakirs are usually regarded, and he was Runjeet Singh's instructor. Runjeet Singh wanted some one who could in no way be accused of complicity—"

"And you offered your services. It is all down in the records. Well, he decided that you must sleep until nine times fourteen years had come and gone. He said your life was of little use either to the world or yourself; but

if it were devoted to science your parents need not be so ashamed of having given you birth."

I reflected that it was necessary for me to hear all this frank young lady could tell, and that it would therefore be policy to take no note of this reflection on my parents and myself.

"Nine times fourteen—that makes one hundred and twenty-six," I said slowly.

"And one hundred and twenty-six added to 1837 makes 1963," was her triumphant response.

"Where are we?"

"In the court of Loodhiana, just where the operation took place one hundred and twenty-six years ago. Your coffin and the door to your vault were fastened with the Rajah's seal, but to-day Americans rule Loodhiana, and so the bolts were broken by a Yankee blacksmith. It has been proven beyond a doubt that apparent cessation of all the vital functions may continue for an indefinite period, where the right conditions exist, and Runjeet Singh is indeed a happy man. He has gone far beyond all knowledge possessed by the Fakir of Lahore."

"But—but I might not have survived!" I faltered.

"That, my friend, would be a matter of little consequence, when taken into consideration with a scientific question of such importance. But, since you did survive, you should be thankful, for now you'll have a share of Runjeet Singh's triumph. This day has been looked forward to with great anxiety. Did you not see Runjeet Singh and his devotees? I understood they were with you."

"Nine times fourteen makes one hundred and twenty-

six," I repeated, "and Runjeet Singh was quite fifty years old—"

"Oh, he wore out the body you knew," interrupted my companion quickly, "and stepped into another. I think it belonged to a young person who left it, temporarily, on an astral tour. Poor fellow! How unhappy he must have been not to be able to take possession of it again. But such trifles are never to be considered, of course, when a scientific problem is to be solved. It was necessary for Runjeet Singh to remain on earth longer than one body could possibly be made to wear, in order to prove that you would come to life to-day."

"Madam," I said feebly, "if you will change the subject I shall be infinitely obliged. Somehow I—I feel old."

"You don't look old," was her charming response.

It made me feel more at home, for I thought I scented a flirtation.

"Tell me," I pleaded, "could you sacrifice one you loved to the cause of science?"

"Oh, yes," was her instant response, and her face lighted up beautifully. "It is wonderful—it is most desirable to be connected with science in any way! Why, only a year ago I let them use my father—"

"If you please," I interrupted quickly, "I should like to change the subject again."

"I'll talk of something else with pleasure," was the brisk reply. "I am here to-day on business that may, perhaps, be of interest to us both. Will you be so kind as to tell me when you were born?"

"In June, 1816. Now will you be so kind as to tell me why you wish to know?"

"To be sure. I am in search of a husband; but there are certain requirements I must insist upon—"

"I hope I have them," I replied promptly, for she was certainly a vision of loveliness.

"I'll be able to tell you before a great while," she said, as she began figuring on a tablet she carried. "You see it was so long ago, and—oh, dear! I wonder if you have Saturn in your seventh house?"

"I did not know I had so much as one house," I responded, "but this seems an age of surprises, so perhaps I am richer than I thought. If I have a seventh house, and Saturn is in it, and ought not to be there, I'll certainly try to get him out. I feel that I could do anything to please you," I added, fervently.

"Why, don't you understand?" she continued, a look of perplexity on her pretty face; "your seventh house is your house of marriage—"

"So much the better! We'll go there at once."

"How absurdly ignorant you are!"

The exclamation filled me with discomfiture. She made me feel as if it were the most dreadful thing to be ignorant.

"You must remember," I said, "that—that I am very old, according to your reckoning. Perhaps I am growing childish—"

"Nonsense!" Her face brightened. "It is more likely that you were accustomed to different ways when you were alive before. I had forgotten for the moment. Now I see that we have only to understand each other. Tell me, did you not make use of the truths of science when contemplating marriage?"

"No—that is—well, no! I think we depended more upon the truths of the Goddess Love."

"Oh, the Goddess Love! Well, you did live in the dark ages! No wonder history has so much to say of the crimes of those days."

I presume I looked puzzled. Is it surprising? I so disliked having her accuse me of ignorance, that I couldn't make up my mind to ask for an explanation. It seemed to me it would be wiser to keep up my end of the conversation as best I could and trust that light would break in upon me by degrees.

"There were marriages in our day not prompted by love," I ventured, "but the general feeling was that they were very dreadful."

"And the parties were blamed?" she questioned eagerly, "and held up as awful warnings?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Well, what was the result?"

"Oh, I don't know that there was any result! The fact is, people don't—I mean didn't—think of that part of it very seriously. So long as they were married, everybody decided to make the best of it."

"But when they discovered that, through ignorance, they had united themselves to one not of their domain—what did they do then?"

"Then? Ahem! Do you mean when they discovered that they were no longer in love—that they did not agree?"

"That they did not agree; that is the better term. Poor things, how could they agree being in different domains? But what did they do?"

"Oh, the good ones made the best of it, and went

through life together, and the bad ones got divorced and were shunned by the good ones."

"But the children?"

"They usually went to one of their parents or a relative."

"No, no. I mean the children of the—of the good ones, as you call them."

"Why, their parents cared for them, of course."

"You regard the matter simply from a financial point of view," she said, looking at me curiously. "I have read that people did so regard everything in your day, but really did not believe it. It is horrible, utterly horrible. Didn't these—these good ones, know that perfect children could not be born into a loveless home?"

"Well, really, you know, I never heard the subject mentioned. If you'll excuse my saying so, I'll explain that it was not considered, well, exactly modest to talk about children before they were born."

"Not modest! Oh, shades of Uranus! Do you mean that young people were not brought up to consider the coming generation; that babies were brought into the world without preparation—"

"Oh, not so bad as that! I think every mother provided a layette."

"Provided a layette!" It would be impossible to describe the tone in which she repeated my harmless statement. Suffice it to say that it sent me into the depths of humiliation.

"Did these—these good ones—actually live together, knowing that they were not married?"

"Who said they were not married?" I asked indignant-

ly. "A ceremony was always performed by either a preacher, priest or justice of—"

"Oh, you mean man-married? God pays no attention to ties of that sort. Surely you know that. He has laid out plans for us, and pointed the way so plainly that we can have no excuse for going wrong."

While she talked she had been busy with a circular drawing she had made on the tablet—putting all sorts of queer figures into the spaces into which she divided it. Suddenly she looked at me with an air of deep disappointment.

"I'm afraid I shall be obliged to give you up," she said. "I have Saturn in my seventh house, and you have Venus afflicted by Mars, Saturn and Uranus, which shows that you could not agree with the best woman that ever lived."

"Oh, but you are mistaken!" I exclaimed, eagerly. "I know I could agree with you. I love you, darling—"

"Nonsense!" she interrupted, patting my head as if I had been a child, "true love is impossible between us. I have just discovered that you belong to the watery domain. Now, I am an air child. You and I could no more live harmoniously than could the trout and the robin, and it would be dreadful for the children."

"I don't believe it," I protested, choosing to ignore the children. "I don't believe it for a minute. You don't know me! Listen! I have never before seen a woman who interested me in the least. Has not Heaven brought us together most miraculously—"

"Marriage and miracles are in no way related," she responded curtly.

"But let me try to persuade you—"

"My friend, I have Mars afflicting Uranus!"

"Bother! Let him afflict. What I wish to say—"

"Don't you know what is indicated when Mars afflicts Uranus?"

"Can't say I do."

"Well, it shows a very stubborn disposition. I warn you that it is quite useless to try to talk me over. Do you suppose I'd marry a man born under a sign so uncongenial to my own? But do not look so unhappy. I know a very nice girl, belonging to the earthly domain, whom I think you will like. Earth and water get along very nicely. Mud is sometimes the result, but I think you'll be able to mold her to your ideas, and that will certainly be satisfactory to you, coming as you do from the dark ages, where men were taught to consider themselves the superior sex."

"In my day, also, there was match-making," I said, scornfully, "and we never had a very high opinion of the match-makers. They seldom considered the question of love or even preference on the part of their victims."

"They were fools," replied my guest calmly. "I've read about them. They considered nothing except finances. You are deceived in your feeling for me, just as thousands of your fellow beings were deceived, and all because of ignorance. I, too, am pleased with you, for the moment; but I know it must be temporary, because it is contrary to the great natural law for people in antagonistic domains to love each other. I'll tell Miss Seamans about you—"

"Don't trouble yourself," I exclaimed petulantly. "If I can't have you I don't want anyone."

"Don't be absurd," she replied. "Marriages are not lotteries in these days. When you see how beautifully

science governs the marital relation, you'll feel differently."

"When I see!" I exclaimed bitterly. "When shall I see anything outside this room? I am as stiff as a poker. I wonder that you do not call a doctor—"

"Call a what?"

"A doctor."

"What for?"

"To cure me, of course. Do you mean to tell me you have no doctors?"

"I never even heard of such a thing."

"What do you do when you are sick?"

"We are never sick, unless we have sinned, and no one can cure us of that except ourselves. Why don't you commune with your sub-conscious personality?"

That was the straw that broke the camel's back. It was enough to make any man swear, and I did it vigorously. A blue smoke arose from my lips, spelling each word in fantastic letters, and when it cleared away I saw that I was alone. Evidently it had been more than my fair companion could stand.

"I don't care!" I growled savagely. "I'm glad she's gone. She was crazy, without a doubt, and I should have told her so long ago had she not been so very pretty."

But I was destined to learn that Miss Cameron, for that was the young lady's name, was not crazy in the least. What she told me was only too true, and the worst of it all was that I could not have revenge on Runjeet Singh, for he had given up his borrowed body soon after proving his point regarding my resurrection and had gone to a more congenial planet. I was told that he left a memorandum for the benefit of his devotees, telling

them where he expected to be on certain dates, that there might be an exchange of thought waves between them. He intended visiting the moon first, then Mars. I've forgotten the order in which the other planets were mentioned; but that is neither here nor there.

I had not remained alone in my helplessness a great while when Miss Seamans, of the earthly domain, called upon me. She seemed to me so much more beautiful than Miss Cameron—bah!—more beautiful than any woman I had ever seen, that I worshipped her at once, and I think I did not allow many minutes to pass before telling her so.

"I think it will prove as you say," she replied sweetly. "I'm sure you'll be glad to know that I have Jupiter in the seventh house. It does grieve me, though, to know that the sun is afflicted by Mars and square to Jupiter; but we'll be happy again when we're reunited on the other side."

"What do you mean? What is indicated when Mars squares off to Jupiter, on the sun?"

"Why, don't you know? That signifies the death of my husband."

"Oh! Well, my dear, under the circumstances, do you think it would be wise for us to marry?"

"Why not? The sun, with you, is so afflicted by the malefics that your body must become uninhabitable in a few years anyhow."

It was certainly a philosophical way to look at it, and I did my best to accustom myself to the thought. If I had got to die anyhow, I might as well do so as the husband of the peerless Miss Seamans, and I think I made

myself quite clear on the subject, and not entirely unsatisfactory.

"Now," said my affianced, "I have been told just how ignorant you are, and I am going to teach you. I must first teach you to cure yourself. In these days it is a reproach to be sick. Of course, you did not know that; but now I have told you, you must bestir yourself at once. Do you know, there is not a person among my acquaintances under seventy-five who would think of lying abed like this?"

"If they were as stiff as I am—"

"Hush! it will do you no good to repeat that."

"But can't you see that a fellow who has been in one position for one hundred and twenty-six years might be—"

"Don't! Please don't!" and a dainty finger was laid across my lips and two pleading brown eyes looked into mine.

"All right, I won't; but will you please tell me what I may do?"

"Think what a nice long rest you've had! More than a hundred years of sweet dreamless sleep! Isn't it wonderful? How thankful you should be! But now you are rested you should get up and go about your work."

"My work!" I repeated, interrupting her enthusiastic discourse. "Has that been waiting for me all these years?"

"What was it you were doing?"

"I had just opened a cigar shop, and I had added a fine stock of candies. You see, it would be difficult for the ordinary observer to know whether the small boy came to purchase candy or tobacco. There was not an-

other shop like it in the city. I had everything in my own hands, and if it hadn't been for Runjeet Singh—"

"If it hadn't been for Runjeet Singh you would never have known me," interrupted my charming Marguerite.

I was silenced at once.

"And now," she continued, "you must put that tobacco store out of your mind, with all your other sins. You are given a blessed opportunity to begin life anew, and the world is crowded with worthy work that must be done, for the burdens arising from the unholy marriages of the last century have not yet been entirely lifted. Come!"

Marguerite held out her hand, fully expecting to be able to assist me to my feet; but, although I longed to do so, I could not move a muscle.

"Help me," I cried, in the abandonment of despair. "For Heaven's sake, help me or kill me! I can endure this no longer."

She stooped over me, gently making passes above my head. Her lips moved silently. Her very soul shone from her eyes in an agony of entreaty. Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed—minutes that are engraven on my soul—minutes that will go with me into eternity.

"Now, come!" she said, in a low, thrilling voice that seemed to start the blood moving in my shrunken veins. "Come, my love; we will go to begin life together. Come!"

Shall I ever forget the lingering sweetness of that last word! It thrilled my dead bones to the marrow, and I felt my sluggish heart leap within me.

"It is life!" I shouted exultantly. "My beloved, you are giving me life!"

"Come," she repeated, and again she held out her hand.

Oh, God, how I tried to take it! I strove until it seemed to me that my soul was wrenching itself from its tenement of clay. The agony was intense. I felt as if coals of fire burned in my eye-sockets. It seemed as if my entire body was a hollow cylinder, and sensitive, oh, how sensitive! and that sharp rocks of seething lava were being churned within me, with a heavy, constant dash, dash, that sent sharp, spluttering drops of the molten lava over every quivering nerve. But I endured it bravely. I am sure I did, for suffering meant life, and life meant action. There was work to be done. Ah, what a privilege to help do it! And there was Marguerite!

"Come!" she repeated for the third time. The beautiful hand was still extended, but the light of hope that had shone in the dark eyes was slowly, slowly giving place to a dreadful look of anxiety.

I struggled desperately, but I could move neither hand nor foot. Not so much as the tenth part of an inch could I move. With the exception of my brain I was utterly, hopelessly, dead.

"Put a ten dollar gold piece on the table," drawled a cynical voice outside the window. "Tell him he can have it if he will pick it up. I'm sure the spirit of the nineteenth century cannot resist that."

Marguerite went to the window.

"Who speaks?" she asked in astonishment. "I see no one. If you can help us, oh, come quickly!"

Then a marvelous thing came to pass before my unaccustomed eyes. A puff of smoke, from a neighboring chimney as I supposed, was blown through the open window. It gathered, black and dense, beside my bed,

then grew luminous, and slowly from its shifting folds there emerged the form of Runjeet Singh. Marguerite gazed at him without recognition, for he had assumed his old form and looked exactly as I had seen him so many years before.

"It is Runjeet Singh," I said to her, and then to him, "Oh, Master! I pray you make me as you found me."

The shade of Runjeet Singh paid not the slightest attention to my wail of distress, but turned to Marguerite, his brilliant eyes softened by tender compassion.

"My child," he said, "you'd better give him up. He is the incarnation of the nineteenth century—material, disgustingly material! That was the age of gold, you remember. Nothing was held superior to the shining metal. It was believed that even Heaven might be bought with gold. Imagine such a condition, if you can, and you will not wonder that this poor fellow is as you see him. They were all so in that day. They all suffered, as he is suffering now, as he must still suffer, before they softened the metallic substance in which they have encased their soul. Why should you suffer, too, Marguerite? It is not necessary."

Marguerite looked at him with clear brown eyes, in which the shadow of a hidden resolution was slowly taking shape.

"Must he bear much of such pain as this before he can arise?" she asked.

"Much more, and worse."

"But eventually he will conquer this dreadful rigidity?"

"Should he persevere he may conquer it while still in the flesh. If not, he must do so when the spirit has left the body, and then the pain will be no less intense."

"Then I will stay with him, Runjeet Singh. I will encourage him, help him, love him, suffer with him if necessary; but I will never leave him. He shall be victorious. We shall yet know happiness together."

Runjeet Singh looked at her searchingly, piercingly, but the sweet eyes did not waver.

"You will do it," he muttered, "and there will be victory. Blessed is the man who wins the love of such a woman—thrice blessed when he is worthy of it."

The heavy cloud slowly enfolded Runjeet Singh. A light breeze, wandering through the window, dispersed it. Runjeet Singh was gone.

Marguerite bent over me, her face shining with hope and courage.

"Come, my love," she said; "you have had a nice rest; now make one more effort. Never mind the pain! See! Here is my hand; I am waiting to help you."

Mr. Dillingham's Correspondent.

When Mr. and Mrs. Dillingham married, it was their intention to live together. So strong was this intention that it led each to incur the displeasure of near and dear relatives for the sake of the other ; yet at the close of the third year of their wedded life they were occupying separate apartments, removed from each other by nearly a mile of the bustling city in which they had started to build up a home.

In all probability they would never have separated, except at the call of the grim reaper, had it not been for the Society of Automatic Writers. Mr. Dillingham had been married nearly two years when he became a member of this society. His interest had been excited when first he heard of it. On his return from the first meeting he had attended, it had occurred to him to try his own powers of passivity. Who knew but his hand might become very useful to his absent friends, as an organ of telepathy!

A writing tablet lay on the table beside him. He held a pencil lightly over it, and became as passive as possible, and waited. He was almost discouraged, and had decided to give it up, when he felt a queer sensation along his arm, and a growing numbness in his passive fingers.

The pencil moved. He was sure that it had passed from his own control. It traced long, irregular scrawls on the paper, like a baby's attempt at writing. He felt that his hand was controlled by another as if it were being guided by one who moved it from the forearm.

Faster and faster it moved, and he could see that the wavering lines were forming themselves into letters, which gradually became quite distinct. When he could see that words were being written, he closed his eyes, that he might not, unintentionally, guide his pencil, and not until his hand became quiet did he look at the paper before him. It was covered with a communication in fine penmanship, with sharply pointed letters, as unlike as possible to his own. This is what he read:

"I am interested in the published accounts of the work done by the Society of Automatic Writers, and have decided to send this thought on, hoping that it may secure me a correspondent from somewhere. I am residing in an English village in Simla, India.—Esther Mayo."

Mr. Dillingham did not lose his presence of mind, but immediately concentrated his will power on an effort to project his thought to Simla. If he were successful, and Esther Mayo could attain the proper degree of passivity, she would soon be tracing words which should tell her that her communication had been received, and that he was most anxious to learn more concerning her.

He concluded not to go to bed until sufficient time had elapsed to allow of a reply from his new correspondent. There was not a shadow of a doubt in his mind that there was such a place as Simla in India, and that a person named Esther Mayo was living there. It pleased him to imagine her to be young, pretty, and in every way at-

tractive. While he waited, he wondered if he were in duty bound to lay before the Society of Automatic Writers the result of his experiment and finally concluded to say nothing until he had learned more of his fair correspondent. If she were young and attractive, it would be wise as well as pleasant to keep her existence a secret.

An hour passed before Mr. Dillingham felt impelled to take his pencil and make himself passive. In just six minutes his hand began to write, and he closed his eyes until it again became motionless, then he read:

"It was a success. Thank God! Now this dreadful loneliness will be less hard to bear. I am an orphan, nineteen years of age. At the death of my parents, my uncle was appointed my guardian. He has squandered my property, and now, when I am nearing my twenty-first birthday, he desires my death, that I may take no steps to bring him to justice. I have never been allowed companionship or freedom. I have plenty to eat, plenty to wear, and plenty to read; but for three years I have been a prisoner behind iron bars, on the top floor of his country residence a few miles from Simla. He is my only relative in India. My other relatives and all my friends suppose me to be dead, for so he wrote them soon after bringing me here. I wish some of them could be induced to join your society; but they have not yet risen above the level of those who believe nothing that is not revealed to them by the evidence of their five senses. I wish you would write me regularly. Shall we not give an hour to each other at this time every day?—Esther Mayo."

Is it surprising that Mr. Dillingham replied "yes" to that request? It strikes me that there are few of us who, having gone thus far, would not wish to go a little farther.

Mr. Dillingham's mistake lay in concealing his intentions from Mrs. Dillingham.

Mr. Dillingham's reticence was not entirely due to the fact that this strange correspondent was a young lady. That might have had something to do with it, but not everything. Since the second month of his married life Mr. Dillingham had been very careful not to tell his wife anything about himself which he did not wish her mother and sister to know. He firmly believed that a woman was constitutionally bound to tell all she knew about her husband to her nearest and dearest relatives, more especially if her knowledge would be likely to put him in a ridiculous or unmanly light.

This opinion was first impressed on the mind of Mr. Dillingham by his chancing to overhear his wife recount as a "good joke" a little circumstance in which he had shown himself so simple that he could never recall it without a scarlet blush and a whispered oath. He had indignantly taken Mrs. Dillingham to task for telling everything she knew, and she had tearfully protested that she had not for a moment supposed that he would care about so trifling an affair. He had then decided that, if she considered such an affair trifling, and was determined to cry if not permitted to repeat all trifling affairs to her female relatives, it would be wiser to keep to himself everything which he was not quite willing should be classed under that head.

The occult sciences were, in the mind of Mrs. Dillingham's mother, nothing more nor less than sly suggestions from his satanic majesty, and the members of this good lady's family who dared to entertain opinions dif-

ferent from her own were not in a position to enjoy unbroken peace.

There were times when Mr. Dillingham sincerely regretted that Mrs. Maybury had concluded to forgive her daughter for marrying him. He said that her opinion had no weight whatever, so far as he was concerned, yet he was careful that she should not know how interested he had become in automatic writing. Perhaps, had Mr. Dillingham known why his mother-in-law entertained such antipathy toward the occult sciences, he might not have considered it, as he did, only one more proof of her stupendous ignorance. He could not know, for she never told it, that, before Mrs. Dillingham was born, she had been told by a clairvoyant that she was soon to give birth to a boy who would be able to live without a stomach, and that he would travel with a circus, and be the means of bringing her a great fortune. The good lady did not want such a son, but if she must have him, and she firmly believed she must, why, she wanted the money also; and so, not to be anticipated by any other mother who might have such a son, she wrote at once to Barnum, asking him to make her an offer. The showman, supposing the child to be already born, sent an agent to investigate. He arrived ten minutes after the present Mrs. Dillingham came into the world. The visit was most unsatisfactory to all concerned, and rendered it quite impossible for Mrs. Maybury ever again to put faith in anything of that sort, not emphatically endorsed by her pastor. The trouble lay in her belief that the members of her family should accept her opinions without having passed through the experiences which led her to adopt them, or even without being allowed to know of such experiences. All things

considered, it is not to be wondered at that Mr. Dillingham decided to say nothing about Esther Mayo; yet, as I have said, it would have been wiser had he not done so.

During the next few weeks, Mr. Dillingham's habits were astonishingly regular. No matter where he might be spending his evening, or how much he might be enjoying himself, he always excused himself in time to be at home at eleven o'clock. He then told his wife that he had work to do, and wished to be alone, and ten minutes later he would be seated beside his library table, his pencil in his hand, and his writing tablet open before him.

Every communication from Esther Mayo had been carefully preserved. On the lower left hand corner of each he had written the date of its arrival. On several, he had made a note of the thought he had sent in reply, and not a few of these thoughts were of an extremely ardent nature. Mr. Dillingham liked to read them over and over again, and try to imagine how the lovely Esther looked when her hand penned such and such a message.

"I'll bet she blushed, here," he would say to himself, "and this brought the smiles to her lips! I shouldn't be surprised if this made her a little spunky, and like as not she threw the paper down and set her pretty foot upon it; but when she received this she knew, of course, that I was only joking. I wonder if she was pleased when I told her that I loved her? I wish she could be persuaded to answer a direct question. What a coy little creature she must be!"

As may be seen, Mr. Dillingham's correspondent gave him abundant food for reflection, and was a source of great happiness.

Thoughts of what she had last written and what he

should next say filled his mind so completely that he could give his attention to little else. His friends watched him anxiously, fearing that he was about to become the victim of some disorder of the brain. Fred Maybury, his wife's brother, even went so far as to question him about his symptoms, but to every question Mr. Dillingham replied that he had never been so well in his life. He was particularly short in his replies to Fred, for once during the process of questioning that young man had asked him if he were not subject to strange hallucinations, and had advised him to go to bed at half past ten every night. He had said this with a meaning expression of his bright, black eyes that had made Mr. Dillingham strangely nervous. If Fred had not been the son of his mother, with her opinions firmly engrafted on his mind, he would have been tempted to think that his brother-in-law had not been in earnest when he had expressed his contempt for the occult sciences, and that he was not unaware of the truths demonstrated by the Society of Automatic Writers. It made Mr. Dillingham quite sick when the thought came to him that perhaps Fred also was in communication with Esther Mayo. He had no proof that he was her only correspondent. He had asked her, repeatedly, whether she wrote to anyone else; but she always evaded this, as she did all other questions. There were times when he was tempted to believe that his thought did not reach her at all; but her next communication was sure to convince him that he was wrong. Of one thing he was certain, there was no doubt that the charming Esther had given her fresh young heart into his keeping. The thought afforded him as much pleasure as pain. If it had not been for Anna, his wife—but it was for

Anna! Mr. Dillingham did not want to desert Anna; he did not want to lose her love; he did not want her to feel that he was deserving of reproach; he did want things to go on, so far as he and she were concerned, just as they had been going on—but if it were not for Anna, he knew that he should go at once to the rescue of Esther. He spent many pleasant hours in thinking out the details of a trip to India, of his meeting with Esther, of their flight together, and of their prosecution of the unfeeling uncle. He never got much farther than this in his day dreams. Sometimes he would think of himself in foreign lands with Esther; but even in the most daring flights of his imagination he could not bring his fair correspondent to America—the home of Anna and Anna's relatives.

In an evil moment Mr. Dillingham went to a clairvoyant, hoping that she might be able to tell him something more about Esther than he could glean from her letters. He had never believed in clairvoyance, and had unhesitatingly proclaimed his idea that anyone who pretended to be able to look into the future was a fraud and a liar. He would have added "and possessed of the devil" had he not known that such an admission would give Mrs. Maybury great joy, and he said that he was not sent into this world to add to the pleasure of his mother-in-law. He studiously refrained from doing anything whatsoever which might go to show that he had mistaken his mission in life regarding that individual.

It is but a step from one branch of the mysterious to another, and any one who had known that Mr. Dillingham had become a member of the Society of Automatic Writers would not have hesitated to stake a large sum of money on the assertion that he, notwithstanding his

sneers at clairvoyance, would within six months be standing knocking for admission at the door of a clairvoyant. They would not have lost their money. Mr. Dillingham chose a clairvoyant living on the outskirts of the city, that he might be as far as possible from the streets frequented by his acquaintances. He did not wish to be seen standing at the door of such a person. He glanced hastily around to make sure that he had not been followed; but he failed to see the familiar form of his brother-in-law hiding behind a tree on the opposite side of the street.

"My dear sir," said the clairvoyant, when, at last, he found himself seated opposite her in a little closet-like room, "I see crape on your hat. There will be a death in your family before very long. I think it will be your wife."

"How soon?" asked Mr. Dillingham, faintly. He had not thought to hear anything like this, and he wished he had not come.

"In about a year, I should say," replied the clairvoyant.

"Are you sure it is my wife? May it not be my mother-in-law? She has rheumatism—"

"It is not your mother-in-law. I see that lady plainly. She is large and strong. She will live many years yet, and she will not desert you; but you will not have your wife long."

The clairvoyant then proceeded to give Mr. Dillingham an idea of his own characteristics. He had thought that he knew himself pretty well; but she succeeded in impressing him with the belief that he was a great deal better fellow than he had supposed himself to be; but that he had not yet been well understood. There was

something within himself that told him she had hit it exactly. She ended by assuring him that he was destined to be rich, honored, happy, famous, and beloved by his countrymen, and he paid her a dollar and left without having heard one word about Esther Mayo. Indeed, it must be said to his credit that the news that he was so soon to lose his wife had driven all thought of Esther from his mind for the moment.

Mr. Dillingham did not want his wife to die. He could not be surer of anything than he was of that, and when he got back to his office he buried his face in his hands and wept bitterly at the thought of the great bereavement in store for him. He was so busily engaged in this, to him, unusual exercise, that he failed to hear his door open and close again, and did not know that he was not alone until he heard the voice of his brother-in-law.

"My stars!" exclaimed Fred, in undisguised astonishment. "What can ail the man?"

Mr. Dillingham raised his head quickly, and tried to look as if he had been overcome with amusement.

"You here, Fred?" he said, with a pitiful attempt at nonchalance. "I have laughed over this ridiculous letter until I have actually cried. It is the funniest thing I ever read in my life." As he spoke he caught up a letter which had been lying idle on the desk, and shoved it into the envelope; but not before the quick-eyed Fred had seen that it was from a business acquaintance who could not have written anything funny if he would, and would not if he could.

"Let's hear it," he said. "It isn't fair for you to keep all the good things to yourself."

"It has something to do with his private affairs," replied

Mr. Dillingham, evasively, "and I am not at liberty to show it now. You shall see it later on. Won't you be seated, Fred?"

"No, thanks; can't stay but a moment. Say, old chap, let's go to the meeting of the Society of Automatic Writers, to-night. I have an acquaintance who is a member, and I'm sure I can get him to give us cards."

Mr. Dillingham was struck dumb with amazement, and, in the few seconds that elapsed before he regained his speech, he did a great deal of thinking. He could not go to the meeting with Fred, for then that young man would discover that he was a member of the society, and that was precisely what he did not want any member of his wife's family to know. He felt that he must do everything in his power to prevent Fred from going at all, but he must not arouse that young man's suspicions by appearing over anxious. If Fred should go, there was no knowing but that he might become so infatuated as to join the society himself, which would, of course, prevent Mr. Dillingham's further attendance. And even a hasty withdrawal from the society, before Fred should be admitted, might not prevent that young man from discovering that he had been a member. These thoughts, and many more of a like nature, flitted through Mr. Dillingham's mind during that short period of silence. Meanwhile Fred watched him narrowly.

"Well," he said finally, "do you agree to go?"

"What would your mother say?" inquired Mr. Dillingham, gravely.

"She need know nothing about it; neither need Anna. I don't see why we should consider ourselves bound to tell them everything we know, do you?"

"No," said Mr. Dillingham, thoughtfully, "perhaps not." Then he recovered himself. "The fact is," he said, "I should not like to have my wife go to a place of that sort." It had suddenly occurred to Mr. Dillingham that the wisest way for him was to assume a tone of high morality, even bordering on austerity. He could do that well, especially in the presence of those younger than himself. Fred was nearly ten years younger, and besides he had no father. Mr. Dillingham felt that now was the time for him to show a fatherly interest in his brother-in-law.

"Well," resumed Fred, somewhat impatiently, "I did not say anything about Anna's going, did I?"

"No; but the idea is this: have I a right to do that which I should not care to have her do—worse yet, which I should not care to have her know?"

"Fudge and nonsense! Do you mean to tell me that you carry that thought into your daily life?"

"I mean to tell you that I try to," replied Mr. Dillingham, in a tone of conscious propriety.

Mr. Dillingham would have choked over this statement had he not just returned from a clairvoyant who had told him that he never did a thing which he would not care to have the world know. Since learning how very soon he was to be called upon to bury his wife, he had resolved to do nothing to displease her, and he quieted his conscience with the thought that he had used the word "try" in present time.

"Oh, well," said Fred, carelessly, "if you feel like that about it, I'll say no more. I hate to go alone, however."

"Why do you go? Fred, let me ask you to change your mind about it. Let me persuade you for the sake of

your dear old mother. It would grieve her and do you no good."

"I am not so sure about that," returned Fred. "I've been reading up in spiritualism and hypnotism and psychical research, and all that stuff, and I begin to think that a fellow can get great fun in that line. Did you ever go to a clairvoyant, George?"

The question was sudden, but Mr. Dillingham was equal to the emergency.

"Fred," he said, gravely, "I thought you had a better opinion of me than to ask a question like that. Do you think I have taken leave of my common sense?"

"That doesn't follow, in my opinion. I know ever so many fellows who have been, and who have quite as much common sense as the rest of us. Honest, now, George, have you not been?"

"I have not."

Mr. Dillingham told the lie with a steady voice, but his face reddened uncomfortably, and he kept his eyes on the paper knife with which he was playing.

"Hum! hum-hum!" Fred cleared his throat with impudent emphasis, in the opinion of the guilty Mr. Dillingham. "Well," he said, "I must be going. If I attend the meeting to-night, shall I tell you what I hear?"

"As you like," returned Mr. Dillingham, with well-assumed indifference.

Mr. Dillingham was so unnerved after Fred's call that he could not turn his attention to his work. He longed to go home and take his Anna in his arms, and tell her how dearly he loved her, and how unhappy he should be without her. All the tenderness of the days of his courtship had been brought back by his fear that he was about

to lose her. At last he could no longer withstand the influence which was urging him homeward, and, donning hat and overcoat, he was soon unlocking the door of his house. Anna was not at the door to meet him. She did not come bounding down the stairs, as had always been her custom, when she heard him enter the hall at an unusual hour. She was not in the parlor with guests or in the sitting room with her fancy work, or in her boudoir with a headache. She was in the library. When Mr. Dillingham looked into that room he saw her there, and her mother sat close beside her. They had found the communications from Esther Mayo. They had discussed them. Anna's eyes were red and swollen with weeping. Mrs. Maybury glared at her son-in-law when he entered the room, and he thought that her eyes had never more closely resembled those of an incensed cat, although he had always considered the resemblance striking.

"Mr. Dillingham," said Mrs. Maybury, icily, "will you oblige me by explaining these letters?"

"Madam," he replied, "will you oblige me by telling me by what right you go to my private desk."

"By the right of a mother, sir! By the God-given right of a mother, who cares more for her daughter's happiness than for her own peace of mind."

There was a grandiloquence about this statement that staggered Mr. Dillingham for a moment. His usual mode of warfare with his mother-in-law was to let her alone as much as possible. He had learned that he could incense her terribly, and preserve his own dignity, by ignoring her completely at those times when she was most determined to reduce him to a state of abjection.

He paid no further attention to her, now, but turned to his wife."

"Anna," he said, "when you can give me a few moments alone, I will endeavor to satisfy your curiosity."

"What you have to say," sobbed Anna, "must be said before my mother."

"She will need witness—" began Mrs. Maybury.

"What in thunder—" interrupted Mr. Dillingham, grasping his wife by the shoulders.

"Take care, sir," exclaimed Mrs. Maybury. "Would you add cruelty to the list of your other offenses?"

"I am — go — going to — to get — a — di-v-o-r-c-e!" sobbed Anna. "I—I can't live—live with a man—f mean a f-f-fiend—fiend who loves—loves ano-t-h-e-r."

"Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Mr. Dillingham, "you don't know what you are talking about."

"Oh, of course not!" exclaimed Mrs. Maybury, with intense sarcasm. "And such sweet little notes as this can tell her nothing. 'Dear George, my life is bound up in yours. I never knew happiness before, and it is sweet, sweet!' To which I see you replied as follows—"

"Drop that!" thundered Mr. Dillingham.

"To which you replied," continued the old lady, "'Your last letter, my darling Esther—'"

"Hold your tongue, madam, or leave this house."

"My darling Esther, your last sweet communication gives me unspeakable pleasure. My heart—'"

At this point, Mr. Dillingham gently, but firmly, led his mother-in-law to the door, pushed her out into the hall, and locked the door behind her. Then he turned once more to his weeping wife who, but a few moments before,

he had longed to take in his arms. He did not feel quite so lover-like now.

"Anna," he said, "I hope you will realize the extent of your own folly when I tell you that I wrote all those letters myself."

"Why, George Dillingham, what an awful lie! What you have been doing is bad enough—but to lie about it! Oh, my, what is going to come from all this! I wish I were dead!"

Mr. Dillingham was about to reply that he echoed the wish, but he suddenly remembered how short a time she had to live, and his heart grew tender again.

"Anna, my dear little girl—"

"Don't dear—little—girl me! I hate you!"

"But you must let me explain. Can't you see that the paper on which these notes are written has been torn from my writing tablet? See here, dear! Don't you see how nicely they fit? That ought to convince you of the truth of what I am saying."

"George Dillingham, do you think I am such a fool as to imagine that there are no writing tablets of this size, except yours?"

"But if I should show you that there is a note for every leaf torn from—"

"I should know," interrupted his wife, "that you had answered every note you received."

"But, Anna, can you not see that these sheets have never been folded to fit an envelope? See, there are no creases in them."

"I presume you have ironed them out. A man who can write such letters to a woman not his wife, is capable of anything."

"Mrs. Dillingham, you shall hear my explanation. I—"

"Mr. Dillingham, I have just received a letter which makes any explanation on your part quite unnecessary."

"A letter! What—what—who—"

"I found one of your darling Esther's loving notes on the floor several days ago, and sent it to a man who reads character from handwriting."

"Ah!" Mr. Dillingham spoke the word as ironically as possible; but, notwithstanding the cutting sarcasm of his wife's words, he was greatly interested in what she had said. He hoped she would tell him what she had learned.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Dillingham, "I know all about it." She drew a letter from her pocket, and began to read: "'She is a sprightly brunette (you have always professed not to like brunettes), a heartless flirt, a girl who does not hesitate to break up a home when prompted by her love of admiration, a girl whose vanity can not be satisfied with the homage of less than a dozen men at a time. She wins hearts just for the pleasure of breaking them.' And this, George Dillingham, is the sort of girl whom you prefer to your own wife!"

Mrs. Dillingham was so overcome by her emotions that she could no longer remain in the presence of her husband. She rushed from the room and flung herself into the arms of her mother, who was seated as close as possible to the keyhole.

That very night Mrs. Dillingham left her husband's house and took rooms near her mother, and Mr. Dillingham was left to nurse his grief and rage in solitude. He no longer cared how soon his Anna died. He even went

so far as to say that the sooner she died the better pleased he should be; but that was when he was very angry. He allowed his thoughts to dwell with Esther almost continually, and at last he decided that, with her, he could find balm for all his woes. She would give him love, sympathy, peace. She would understand him as no one else had ever done, and, best of all, she had no relatives, except the old uncle whom he would very soon place behind iron bars. He did not believe one word about her being a flirt. He was willing to believe that she was a brunette and fascinating, but not that she won hearts only to break them. How could he believe that after reading her letters? Did he not know that she was much more deeply in love with him than he was with her? Had she not been the first to make advances? And she had made the advances, not because she was a flirt, but because she was a dear unsophisticated young girl, who had given her loving heart into his keeping. Mr. Dillingham begged leave to flatter himself that he knew enough about human nature—more especially girl nature—to be able to tell that.

Mr. Dillingham told his partner that he needed a vacation, and thought of taking one. The partner replied that he had not been acting like himself of late, and that he thought it would be a good thing. Mr. Dillingham then dismissed all of his servants but the housekeeper, whom he placed in charge of the house for an indefinite time. He told her that he needed a vacation, and should not return until he felt better. He sent word to his wife that she could go ahead with her suit for divorce; that he did not intend to contest it. He bought a ticket for India, and in thirty-six hours from the time his wife left him,

he had completed his arrangements for the voyage. He expected to start the next day, and decided to spend his last evening in his library, writing to Esther. He must prepare her for a long visit, and get a few directions from her which would enable him to find her without the loss of one precious moment. He was nervously trying to busy himself during the hour which must elapse before he could hope to receive a communication from her, when he was disturbed by the entrance of the housekeeper, with a note. It was from his mother-in-law, and bade him come at once, for Anna was dying, and wanted him.

Once more Esther was forgotten. He hastened to the bedside of his Anna, although he could not hope to get back in time to receive a communication from Esther.

Anna had attempted to end her life by taking an overdose of arsenic, and when Mr. Dillingham arrived he found the family physician relieving her of the poison by the energetic and unromantic measures usually employed in such cases. After an hour of dreadful suspense, he told the frightened family that Anna was out of danger. He then took his leave, after promising to call again on the next day.

"Now," said Fred, somewhat severely, "I want to know what this is all about. Why did Anna take poison? Why is she not at her own home?"

"Did you not know," replied his mother, "that that wretch," pointing to the unhappy Mr. Dillingham, "that flint-hearted, base, deceiving wretch has been corresponding with another woman?"

Fred's boyish face showed a great deal of intense, but badly mixed, feeling when he heard the news. It was quite evident that it affected him strangely.

"Who is she?" he asked, excitedly.

"Her name is Esther Mayo. She is a brunette of nineteen, a vain, heartless, fascinating flirt, who does not hesitate to break up the happiest family."

"How do you know all this, mother?" Fred looked almost indignant, and his mother mistrusted, at once, that he, too, knew Esther Mayo. Mr. Dillingham was watching Fred closely, and his former suspicions were now confirmed. Anna was out of danger, and he felt almost sorry that he had lost the opportunity of corresponding with Esther that night.

"How do I know?" repeated the mother, "look at this letter, and see for yourself."

Fred read the letter, and the puzzled expression on his face intensified.

"Where did it come from?" he asked.

"From Signor Fontanelli. At my request Anna sent him a specimen of Esther's handwriting."

"But, mother, I thought you had no faith in people of that sort."

"In desperate cases one must use desperate measures," replied Mrs. Maybury somewhat ambiguously, "and even I am obliged to admit that Signor Fontanelli is quite remarkable."

"I don't see why. You don't know that he has told a word of truth about this young lady."

"Reason tells me, and ought to tell you, that he has spoken the truth. Fred, is it possible that you, too, have become interested in that unprincipled female?"

"I am afraid it is possible," replied Fred with a crimson face. "Not only possible but more than probable." Instantly, three pairs of eyes were fixed eagerly on his.

"Is it true?" asked Anna, pointing to the letter which he still held.

"This letter? Not one word of it, my dear sister."

Mr. Dillingham breathed a sigh of relief. He was glad to know that Esther was not a heartless flirt.

"Yet she writes love letters to a married man, at the same time that she is receiving the attentions of a young man," said Mrs. Maybury. "You are infatuated, Fred, and therefore your judgment in this matter is entirely worthless."

"Anna," said Fred, earnestly, "I am awfully sorry this thing has gone so far. Had I not supposed that you and George had the greatest confidence in each other, I should never have done it."

"Done what?" demanded Mr. Dillingham. A horrible fear was tugging at his heart.

"Never tried to get a mental influence over you," replied Fred, boldly. Then he turned again to his sister. "Anna," he said, "I presume you will find it difficult to believe—I mean what I am about to say—but you know I have never deceived you."

"I trust you, Fred, my dear, dear brother," replied Anna, with touching tearfulness.

"Well, then, try to believe that it is possible for one person to influence another to write his thoughts. I had been a member of the Society of Automatic Writers for more than two years before George joined—"

"You a member—" stammered Mr. Dillingham.

"Yes, my dear boy," replied Fred. "When you joined, I kept out to watch developments."

"Do you mean," asked Anna, "that George did actually write those letters himself?"

"I do."

"He told me so, but I could not believe it."

"And Esther Mayo prompted them?" asked Mrs. Maybury, who feared that her son-in-law was about to get off too easily.

"Esther Mayo prompted them," replied Fred.

"And you know Esther Mayo," asked Anna.

"I ought to," replied Fred, "for I am Esther Mayo. If you had not been blind and stupid, you would have seen that the writing is almost exactly like mine."

"Fred," gasped Mr. Dillingham, "were you able to get my thoughts?"

"No, I couldn't get a word, although I tried again and again."

"Thank God!" breathed Mr. Dillingham, but no one heard him.

The excitement was too great for Anna, and she fainted. Mrs. Maybury sent every one from the room, saying that her dear child must not be disturbed again that night. Mr. Dillingham concluded to spend the remainder of the night at his own home. He had a great deal of thinking to do, and wanted to be at home, where he would be undisturbed. Fred insisted on accompanying him.

"I know a man," said Fred, "who is about to start for India. I think you can sell him your ticket. There is no need of Anna knowing anything about that, you know."

"No," replied Mr. Dillingham, meekly. Then, after a moment's silence, "Fred, I wish you would sell this confounded ticket for me."

Sir Jefferson Nobody

Is the title of Effie W. Merriman's new book for boys. Like "The Street Arab Series" it teaches that boys may be gentlemen in the highest sense of the term, even if not born wealthy. The hero of this story, Jeff, or Sir Jefferson Nobody, as he called himself, had no recollection of his parents, or of a time when he was not obliged to look out for himself. A street boy, making the best of life as he found it, he was merry, cheerful, loving and lovable, and no boy can read this story of his life without gaining the useful lesson taught between the lines, but never put into words. Sir Jefferson Nobody is, without doubt, the best and strongest character to be found in this author's juvenile stories. He is decidedly original, and will not easily be forgotten.

Mrs. Merriman is an idealist, of whom one critic has said, "Her stories are like giving a child a certificate of good character and expecting him to live up to it." It is a characteristic that appeals to mothers, especially now when they are beginning to see that, to describe the fault and then warn the child against it, is not so wise as to make him forget the bad in contemplating the good.—Pp. 275; cloth; price \$1.25. Published by A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, Ill. For sale by The Franklin Taylor Pub. Co., Box 376, Minneapolis, Minn.

The Street Arab Series

comprises three books for boys, entitled respectively, "Pards," "A Queer Family," and "The Little Millers." The first book, "Pards," was written at a time when the "Little Lord Fauntleroy" style of boy was most popular, and its purpose was to show that the little street boy possessed quite as many attractive and desirable qualities as those more fortunately placed by birth. This book, the author's first, was accepted by the first publisher to whom it was submitted, and two more were asked for to complete the set. Then followed "A Queer Family" and "The Little Millers" in the order named.

These books have won a place for themselves in the heart of every child so fortunate as to possess them. The entire set can be had, neatly boxed, for three dollars, or the volumes may be bought, separately, at one dollar each.—Cloth; illustrated. Published by Lee & Shepard, Boston, Mass. For sale by Franklin Taylor Pub. Co., Box 376, Minneapolis, Minn.

MOLLIE MILLER

—AND—

THE CONWAYS.

While these two books are really intended for girls, they will be found equally interesting to boys, for boys take quite a prominent part in their pages. "Mollie Miller" was written by request of many readers who had not become sufficiently acquainted with the little heroine in "The Little Millers," of which this book is a sequel.

"The Conways" tells of a band of merry cousins, whose mischief brightens the book from the first cover to the last.

The young people in both these books are full of life and mischief, not at all "goody-goody," but full of good impulses. They are just the sort of young people a mother would be willing to have her children know.

The books are nicely illustrated, and well bound in cloth. They may be had for \$1.25 each. Published by Lee & Shepard, Boston, Mass. For sale by The Franklin Taylor Pub. Co., Box 376, Minneapolis, Minn.

Are You Interested in Any Branch
of
LITERARY WORK?

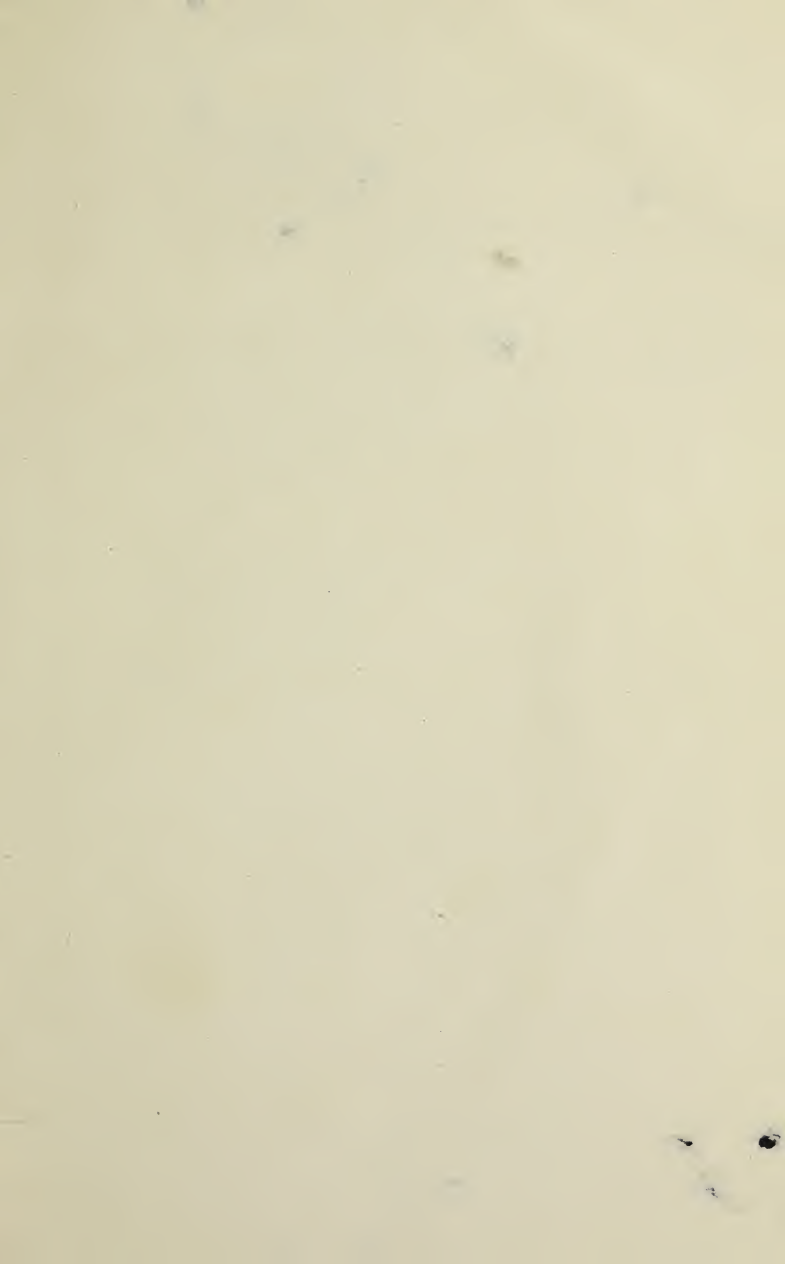
THE
EDITOR

Can help you to

❁❁SUCCESS❁❁

Send 6 cents in stamps for sample copy and
full particulars.

THE EDITOR,
FRANKLIN, - - - OHIO.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 107731454